

Education | Networking | Philanthropy

WCI

GOES GLAM

BOLD IDEAS & BIG IMPACT

80th Annual

**Workers' Compensation
Educational Conference**

- and -

37th Annual Safety & Health Conference

August 23-26, 2026

The Orlando World Center Marriott



WCI

Workers'
Compensation
Institute



The Workers' Compensation Institute (WCI) is pleased to welcome you to the **80th Annual Workers' Compensation Educational Conference and 37th Annual Safety and Health Conference**.

This year's theme, **WCI Goes Glam – Bold Ideas & Big Impact**, reflects the innovation, leadership, and collaboration that define the workers' compensation industry. In a field rich with talent and driven by change, this theme celebrates the individuals and organizations who develop forward thinking solutions and help our industry grow and thrive.

At the heart of the conference are three guiding pillars: **Education, Business Development & Networking, and Charitable Giving**. These pillars shape every aspect of the conference experience and reflect our commitment to delivering exceptional value to attendees, sponsors, and exhibitors alike.

The educational program offers an unparalleled learning experience, featuring **162 sessions and more than 450 speakers**, including top leaders and subject matter experts in workers' compensation and occupational safety and health. With content designed to inform, challenge, and inspire, the program provides extensive professional development opportunities for professionals across the workers' compensation landscape.

Giving back is also a defining element of the conference. Attendees will have numerous opportunities to support meaningful causes, including **Give Kids The World, Kids' Chance, Pet Alliance, the Diversity and Talent Alliance, and Swag for Schools**.

Our **Exhibit Hall**, showcasing more than **250 companies**, is a dynamic space for discovering new products, services, and solutions. Returning by popular demand, the **Mystery Exhibitor Contest** gives attendees the chance to win one of **four \$750 cash** prizes simply by visiting participating exhibit booths.

We invite you to mark your calendar for these signature events and activities:

- **Give Kids The World Service Day**
- **Annual Gala and Silent Auction**
- **Kids' Chance of Florida Golf Tournament at Hawk's Landing Golf Club**
- **Founders' Welcome Reception:** Kick off the conference with General Chair Jim McConaughay, Program Chair Steve Rissman, and the WCI Board of Advisors. Connect with speakers and colleagues, renew friendships, and build new professional relationships in a relaxed setting. Complimentary beer and wine will be served.
- **Prayer Breakfast:** Featuring Pastor Ron Simmons of Designer's Way Christian Church and the inspiring DWAY Praise Team.
- **Opening Session – Industry Keynote:** *"The Next Decade of Risk: Are You Built to Survive It?"*
- **Opening Session – Celebrity Keynote:** **Daymond John**, Founder and CEO of FUBU, Shark Tank star, CEO of The Shark Group, and best selling author.
- **Monday Night Reception & Entertainment:** Enjoy an unforgettable evening as music icon **Bret Michaels** delivers a high energy performance filled with classic hits.
- **Tuesday Night Soirée – Party with a Purpose:** Celebrate the conference's 80th anniversary with **The Molly Ringwalds**, the ultimate '80s tribute band. Fifty percent of ticket proceeds will benefit **Kids' Chance of America** and the **Kids' Chance WORKS Initiative**, which supports students pursuing a wide range of post secondary pathways including college, apprenticeships, skills training, military service, and workforce entry—with special emphasis on careers connected to the workers' compensation industry.

If you see one of us in a session, walking the Exhibit Hall, or attending an event, please stop to say hello and share your feedback. We extend our sincere thanks to our exhibitors, sponsors, Breakout Organizers, Exhibitor Advisory Council, and Board Advisors for their critical support.

We are confident you will experience one of the most well attended, engaging, informative, and exciting conferences in the nation. Enjoy the conference—and don't forget to use **#WCI2026** when sharing your experience on social media.

Sincerely,

James N. McConaughay
General Chair



Steven A. Rissman
Program Chair



Andrew Sabolic
Executive Director



Table of Contents

Conference Information	4
Entertainment & Keynote	5
Signature Events & Activities.....	6-7
A Special Thanks	8

Sunday, August 23, 2026

Kids' Chance Golf Tournament	9
Registration and Exhibit Hall Setup	9
Clarity Under Pressure: The Stress Reset for Workers' Compensation Leaders	9
E. Earle Zehmer National Moot Court Competition Quarterfinal and Semi-Final Rounds.....	9
Founders Welcome Reception.....	9
Professional Mediation Conference	10-11

Monday, August 24, 2026

Prayer Breakfast	12
Registration.....	12
Opening Session & Keynote Addresses	12-13
Headshot Lounge	13
Exhibit Hall Open	13
E. Earle Zehmer National Moot Court Competition Final Arguments.....	13
Reception and Entertainment.....	13
Breakouts For:	
Regulators College.....	14-15
Judiciary College.....	16-17
Professional Mediation Conference.....	18
Risk Managers.....	19
Adjusters	20
Workplace Safety and Health.....	21
OSHA 10-Hour Construction Industry Training	21
National Workers' Compensation Review.....	22
Diversity and Talent.....	23
Top-of-Mind from the C-Suite	24
Physical Therapy	25
Crash Course in Workers' Compensation	26
Cost Containment Strategies	27
Medical Issues & Case Management	28
Temporary Staffing.....	29
Florida Case Law Update.....	30
Regulators Roundtable.....	30

Tuesday, August 25, 2026

FSU Law School Alumni Breakfast.....	31
Registration and Exhibit Hall Open.....	31
Live Surgery.....	31
Headshot Lounge	31
Inns of Court Judicial Luncheon	31
Live Oral Argument.....	31
Ice Cream Social.....	31
Tuesday Night Soiree.....	31
Breakouts For:	
Regulators College.....	32
Return-to-Work	33
Top-of-Mind from the C-Suite	34
Professional Employer Organizations (PEO)	35-36
Attorneys.....	37
Adjusters	38
National Workers' Compensation Review.....	39-40
Medical Issues & Case Management	41-42
OSHA 10-Hour Construction Industry Training	43
Workplace Safety and Health.....	44-45
Judiciary College.....	46
Risk Managers.....	47
Longshore and Harbor Workers' Act, Jones Act & Defense Base Act	48
Liability	49
Medicare Secondary Payer Compliance	50
Public Entities.....	51

Wednesday, August 26, 2026

Registration.....	52
Breakouts For:	
Alliance of Women in Workers' Compensation	52
AI & Technology.....	53
Multi-State Workers' Compensation Laws	54-55
Florida Division of Workers' Compensation.....	56
Workplace Safety and Health.....	57
OSHA 10-Hour Construction Industry Training	57
Fraud	58
Medical Issues & Case Management	59
Longshore and Harbor Workers' Act, Jones Act & Defense Base Act	60
Judiciary College.....	61
Parking Map & Shuttle Schedule.....	62
Maps of the Orlando World Center Marriott	63

Conference Information

Registration

You can register for the conference at www.wci360.com. The registration fee is \$450 until August 18, 2026, at 8:00 pm eastern time. The onsite registration fee is \$485. WCI has partnered with Orlando World Center Marriott (conference hotel), and the Caribe Royale (overflow hotel) for special conference attendee rates. The Orlando World Center Marriott is sold out. WCI will send you a passcode link upon your conference registration to reserve your hotel room at the Caribe Royale. Complementary shuttle bus service will be available to travel to and from the Orlando World Center Marriott.

Conference App

Download the official app for the conference: Whova – Event & Conference App via the Apple Store or Google Play. Join our event app to:

- View session details and room locations
- View Speaker & attendee profiles
- Personalize your agenda
- Receive event updates and notifications
- Connect with other attendees
- Create and join meet-ups

Sign in or create an account with the email you registered with.

Future Conference Dates

The dates for our future conferences are August 22-25, 2027, August 20-23, 2028, August 19- 22, 2029, and August 18-21, 2030. Please mark these dates on your calendar. As always, a limited number of sleeping rooms available will be able at the conference hotel, and we encourage you to make your reservations early. Only conference registrants will be allowed to confirm hotel reservations. The 2027 WCI conference registration will tentatively open during the first week of October. Upon receipt of your 2027 conference registration, WCI will send you a passcode link upon your registration to reserve your hotel room.

Sponsorships and Exhibit Hall

The conference attracts thousands of workers' compensation and safety and health professionals from around the nation. Various opportunities are available to increase your brand recognition and business development prospects. If you are interested in purchasing a sponsorship or an Exhibit Hall booth package, go to www.wci360/sponsorships/.

- **WCI is continuing its Mystery Exhibitor Program. Each day, WCI will randomly select two (2) Mystery Exhibitors—four (4) total over the course of the conference (two on Monday and two on Tuesday). Winning attendees will be selected from the leads collected by the Mystery Exhibitor. Each prize is a \$750 cash award, and each attendee is eligible to win only once.**

Continuing Education Information

Continuing Education Information will be provided in the conference registration bag or visit the Continuing Education Booths on the convention level to obtain credit information.

Entertainment & Keynote

Monday Night Reception & Entertainment

Monday, August 24

7:00 pm – 11:00 pm

Palms Ballrooms – Sabal, Sago, Royal

Get ready for an unforgettable night as music icon **Bret Michaels** takes the stage to deliver a high-energy performance of all killer smash hits for an event you don't want to miss.

Whether he's selling out stadiums or headlining hit TV shows, Bret Michaels has brought his iconic energy and star power to over three generations of loyal fans. As one of music's most legendary singers and songwriters, Michaels counts *Every Rose Has Its Thorn*, *Go That Far*, *Nothing But A Good Time* and *Something To Believe In* as part of his robust catalog of mega-hits. On television, Michaels' shows include the record-breaking enduring hit *Rock of Love with Bret Michaels* and a recent turn as the audience-favorite Banana in Fox's hit *The Masked Singer*. As a well-known creative entrepreneur, Bret took his *Celebrity Apprentice*-winning Trop-A-Rocka Iced Tea and turned it into a bestselling global product for Snapple. Michaels still finds time to give back through his Life Rocks Foundation which supports a myriad of charities & causes around the globe.

The Hooligans will be the opening band featuring British rock from the 60s-90s.



Celebrity Keynote Address

Sponsored by:

sedgwick

Monday, August 24

Opening Session

Palms Ballroom – Canary

Daymond John — Founder & CEO of FUBU, star of ABC's *Shark Tank*, CEO of The Shark Group, and best selling author — will headline the Opening Session.

An entrepreneur in every sense of the word, John's journey began when he took out a \$100,000 mortgage on his mother's home to launch his business from their basement. From those humble beginnings, he built FUBU into a global lifestyle brand with more than \$6 billion in product sales. Over his career he has earned more than 35 major awards, including Brandweek's Marketer of the Year, Advertising Age's Marketing 1000 Award, Ernst & Young's New York Entrepreneur of the Year, and a top five placement on LinkedIn's Top 20 Voices list.

John is also the CEO of The Shark Group, a consulting firm that helps companies shape powerful marketing strategies, connect with celebrity partnerships, and engage consumers in innovative ways. He is the author of multiple best selling books including *The Power of Broke* (2016) and *Rise and Grind* (2018). His sixth book, *Powershift*, explores his proven approach to negotiating, transforming challenges, and achieving breakthrough outcomes.

Celebrating his 11th season on the Emmy winning business show *Shark Tank*, John continues to inspire millions of weekly viewers with his entrepreneurial insight and marketing expertise.



Industry Keynote Address – The Next Decade of Risk – Are You Built to Survive It?

Monday, August 24

Opening Session

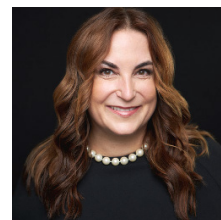
Palms Ballroom – Canary

In today's rapidly evolving business environment, "future-proofing" has become a popular goal—but for many organizations, it remains more aspiration than reality. The pace of technological change, particularly the rise of artificial intelligence, is fundamentally reshaping how businesses operate, how risk is identified and managed, and what operational readiness truly requires. The question is no longer whether disruption is coming—it's whether your organization is built to adapt fast enough.

In this keynote session, Kimberly George and Mark Walls lead industry leaders to challenge conventional thinking about risk management in the next decade. Drawing on real-world insights across claims, insurance, and large-scale operations, they will explore how AI, workforce shifts, litigation trends, and business model disruption are converging to redefine success.

This session will move beyond theory to focus on practical implications: where current strategies are likely to fail, how leading organizations are rethinking operational readiness, and what actions risk leaders must take now to remain relevant.

Because the real risk isn't disruption—it's being unprepared for it.



Signature Events & Activities

Give Kids The World Village (GKTW)

WCI is proud to continue our partnership with Give Kids The World Village—an 89-acre, whimsical nonprofit resort in Central Florida that provides children with critical illnesses and their families with magical week-long wish vacations at no cost.

A stay at the Village is far more than a vacation — it's a joyful escape where families can reconnect and create cherished memories away from the stress of medical treatments. During their stay, children and their families explore world-renowned theme parks by day, then return to the Village each evening for themed parties, lively events, and delightful surprises.

Each day offers unforgettable experiences, such as performing in the “Stellar’s Star Show” talent show, horseback riding at Keaton’s Korral, or playing at Matthew’s Boundless Playground. For many parents, it’s the first time in weeks, months, or even years that they’ve seen their child smile or laugh. The Village offers more than just a break — it provides the gift of time: time to hope, to heal, and to simply be together.

Through our 2026 Gala, Silent Auction, and Service Day, the workers’ compensation community comes together to support that mission and help create life-changing moments for families. Together, these efforts have raised an incredible **\$1.3+ million** for GKTW since 2012!

GKTW Service Day

Saturday, August 22 | 7:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Join us for a rewarding day of service! Indoor and outdoor volunteer opportunities will be available at both the Marriott and the Village. Transportation to and from the Village will be provided. It’s a great way to give back, connect with fellow professionals, and make a real difference. Volunteers can choose their preferred project, but space is limited and filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Putting on the Ritz Gala

Saturday, August 22 | 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM | Orlando World Center Marriott – Palms Ballroom

Step into old Hollywood elegance with **Putting on the Ritz**, an unforgettable gala supporting **Give Kids The World Village**—reimagined through the bold sparkle of our **Goes Glam** conference theme. Guests will enjoy a night of glamour, style, and purpose, where classic sophistication meets modern flair, all in support of creating magical moments for children and families facing critical illness. Dress to dazzle, give generously, and help us turn glamour into goodwill.

Sponsorship Opportunities

Amplify your impact by sponsoring the **Putting on the Ritz Gala**! Sponsorship packages offer premium benefits including brand visibility, event recognition, and reserved seating. Support a worthy cause while showcasing your organization.

Silent Auction

The Silent Auction is a key highlight of the Gala — and a powerful way to support Give Kids The World. From exclusive getaways to luxury items and one-of-a-kind experiences, every donation helps bring joy and hope to families in need.

Get Involved!

Visit <https://wci360.com/gktw/> to:

- Sign up for a service project
- Purchase Gala tickets
- Explore sponsorship opportunities
- Donate to the Silent Auction
- Reserve discounted rooms at the Orlando World Center Marriott for Friday and Saturday nights

Together, we can make a difference — one magical moment at a time.



Pet Alliance & Cuddle Zone

Sponsored by:

ConservCare, Inc.
National Provider of Home Care Services



Do you love animals? The Pet Alliance is dedicated to rescuing, healing, rehabilitating, and re-homing dogs and cats. They respond to a wide range of emergencies, including hoarding cases, abusive environments, and natural disasters such as hurricanes, fires, and floods. They also care for pets who are unwanted or whose owners can no longer keep them.

As a nationally recognized pet rescue leader, the Pet Alliance is committed to improving the lives of animals—and the people who love them. Each year, more than 5,200 homeless dogs and cats find compassion, care, and hope through their efforts.

How can you help?

Visit the **Cuddle Zone** in the Exhibit Hall to make a donation or even adopt a puppy or kitten. Every dollar collected goes toward feeding hungry animals and supporting ongoing rescue operations. On average, it costs about **\$400 per animal** to rescue, provide medical care, rehabilitate, and find them a forever home.

Whether you choose to feed a pet, sponsor a rescue transfer, or simply donate, your support is vital.

Learn more or contribute today at: www.wci360.com/give-back/

Signature Events & Activities

Tuesday Night Soirée: Party for a Purpose

Tuesday, August 25 | 8:00 PM- 10:30 PM

Sago and Sabal Ballrooms | Marriott Orlando World Center

The Tuesday Night Soirée: Party for a Purpose is becoming a must-attend signature event at WCI. More than just a party, it's a chance to connect with fellow attendees, forge new relationships, and enjoy a night unlike anything else.

This year, join us as we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Workers' Compensation Educational Conference with **The Molly Ringwalds**, the ultimate 80s tribute band. Back by popular demand, they will rock the stage with the decade's biggest hits and keep the celebration going.

50% of all ticket proceeds will be donated to **Kids' Chance of America** and its **WORKS** initiative, supporting students and scholarship recipients as they build pathways to their future.

Details & Tickets

- **Tickets: \$50** – includes **2 drink tickets**
- **Dress code:** Embrace the era in your favorite 80s outfit or wear a T-shirt featuring your favorite 80s artist

 To purchase tickets, visit: <https://wci360.com/soiree/>

Our Tuesday Night Soirée promises to be a celebration where music, nostalgia and giving back come together for a truly memorable experience. Let's party with purpose!



Founder's Welcome Reception

Sunday, August 23 | 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm

Palms Ballroom Corridor

Kick off the event by joining General Chair Jim McConaughay, Program Chair Steve Rissman, and the WCI Board of Advisors for a warm and engaging welcome reception. Connect with session speakers and fellow attendees, renew old friendships, and build new professional relationships in a relaxed setting. Complimentary beer and wine will be served.

Prayer Breakfast

Monday, August 24 | 7:00 am – 8:30 am

Crystal Ballroom H

Get ready for a powerful morning at the WCI Prayer Breakfast.

Join WCI and the Diversity and Talent Alliance (DATA) as we welcome Pastor Ron Simmons of Designer's Way Christian Church, along with the dynamic DWAY Praise Team, for an unforgettable time of worship and inspiration. Pastor Ron will deliver a lively and thought-provoking message on how faith and biblical principles intersect with personal branding, leadership, and purpose-driven success. Discover how your spiritual foundation can elevate your workplace influence, enhance your quality of life, and position you to lead with clarity and confidence.

We're also excited to feature special guest speaker and respected industry leader, Dr. Claire Muselman, who will offer meaningful insight into the role of faith in professional life and personal growth. You don't want to miss this powerful gathering of faith, purpose, and leadership!

Separate registration is required, and tickets can be purchased for \$67 at <https://wci360.com/new-prayer/>. If you are interested in sponsoring the Prayer Breakfast, please go to <https://wci360.com/sponsorships/>.

DATA is a not-for-profit organization, and its mission is to develop a pipeline that creates and sustains a diverse workforce and inspires transformative change through partnership, education, and mentorship. To learn more about DATA, go to www.diversityandtalent.org.

6th Annual Kids' Chance of Florida Golf Tournament

Sunday, August 23

Hawks Landing Golf Club – Orlando World Center Marriott

WCI is proud to partner with Kids' Chance of Florida (KCFL) to support educational scholarships for the children of Florida workers who have been severely injured or lost their lives in work-related accidents. Join us for a great day of golf, meaningful networking, and a direct impact on students across our state. In 2025, the tournament raised over \$87,000 for scholarships and celebrated 10 years of impact with 105 scholarships totaling over \$453,000!

Go to <https://wci360.com/golf/> to learn more about registering and sponsorships.

A Special Thanks From WCI!

This conference could not be accomplished without the tremendous support and dedication from the following people.

Board of Advisors

Michele Adams
Julie Fetherman
Mike Hessling

Max Koonce
Judge David Langham
Judge Frank McKay

Dr. Jill Rosenthal
Marc Salm
Irina Simpson

Jim Smith
Scott Westman

2026 Breakout/Session Organizers

Kristin Smith, Adjusters
Christine Jermin, Adjusters
Kara Sepulveda, Adjusters
Nancy Brightwell, Adjusters
Pamela Last, Adjusters
Caitlin Beyl, Adjusters
Betty Justin, Adjusters
Scott Silver, Adjusters
Joe Gold, AI & Technology
Jennifer Papillion, Alliance in Women in WC
Glen Wieland, Attorney Breakout
Judge Neal Pitts, Attorney Breakout
Stephanie Weimer, Cost Containment
Dr. Nate Schilaty, Cost Containment
Lisa Taft, Cost Containment
Yvonne Guibert, Crash Course in WC
Bob Wilson, Crash Course in WC
Rafael Gonzalez, Crash Course in WC
Sabrina Mitchel, Diversity and Talent
Lisel Laslie, FL DWC
Pamela Macon, FL DWC
Lou Stern, Florida Case Law Update
Thomas Donahue, Fraud
Jim Hulett, Fraud
Cynthia Jackson, Injured Worker Inspirational Award
Deputy Commissioner Jason Cording, Judiciary College
Max Koonce, Liability
Mark Salm, Liability
Irina Simpson, Liability
Andrew Reber, Live Surgery
Robert Bamdas, Longshore, Jones, Defense Acts
Michael Bunte, Medical Issues

Teddy Gonzalez, Medical Issues
Julie Fetherman, Medical Issues
Annie Davidson, Medicare Secondary Payer Compliance
Dan Anders, Medicare Secondary Payer Compliance
Jennifer Shymanski, Medicare Secondary Payer Compliance
Judge Jacqueline Steele, Moot Court
Tracey Hyde, Moot Court
Amie DeGuzman, Moot Court
Elaura Hodgetts, Moot Court
Daniel Culpepper, Multi-State WC Laws
George Kagan, National Workers' Compensation Review
Jim Anderson, National Workers' Compensation Review
Bill Pipkin, National Workers' Compensation Review
Dr. Mylene Kellerman, OSHA Program
Torben Madson, PEO
Abram Finkelstein, PEO
Michelle Despres, Physical Therapy
Stuart Suskin, Professional Mediation
Larisa Featherstone, Public Entity
Steve Coonrod, Public Entity
Geoff Bichler, Public Entity
Paolo Longo, Public Entity
Gary Davis, Regulators Roundtable & Regulators College
Zachary Rosenthal, Return-To-Work
Debra Livingston, Return-To-Work
Greg Hamlin, Return-To-Work
Steve Figliuolo, Risk Managers
Sharon Delguercio, Risk Managers
Jim Smith, Safety and Health
Joy Hughley, Temporary Staffing
Max Koonce, Top of Mind from the C-Suite
Irina Simpson, Top of Mind from the C-Suite

2026 Spirit To Serve Committee

Tammy Boyd
Suzette Carlisle Flowers
Donna Check
Doug Clark
Mandy Clark
Melissa Corah

Robin Fielding
Steve Figliuolo
Yvonne Guibert
Amanda Hinsey
Terrell Jones
Taylor Jones

Travis Keels
Anna Marie Kim
Tina LoBono
Molly Lomonaco
Garlana Matthews
Jim McConaughay
Heather McLeod

Terry Melton
Rachel Miller
Jenny Nicaud
Micayla Rowe
Kristy Sands
Ben Schroeder

Josh Schuette
Melissa Shute
Troy Smith
Kim Talley
Natalie Torres
Michelle Wilds

Sunday, August 23

Official
Wi-Fi
Sponsor



Wi-Fi: Marriott Convention Level
Wi-Fi Password: BAUERFEIND

7:00 am – 12:00 pm

Parking Available At The Marriott

Shuttle bus between the overflow hotel and the Marriott World Center is available. Refer to parking map & shuttle schedule. All parking onsite.

8:00 am – 2:00 pm

Kids' Chance Golf Tournament

Hawk's Landing Golf Club

In partnership with WCI 2026 Conference, please join us for the 6th Annual Kids' Chance of Florida Golf Tournament, a day where passion for golf meets purpose. As we gather on the greens of the beautiful Hawk's Landing Golf Club, we're not just playing for par - we're driving towards a brighter future for children affected by workplace injuries. To learn more about how you can help us reach our fundraising goal to help so many deserving kids accomplish their educational goals, please go to www.wci360.com/golf. All proceeds will benefit Kids' Chance of Florida. Luncheon in Hawk's Landing, immediately following the tournament.

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Conference Registration and Information

Convention Level

11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Moot Court Judges' Luncheon (Judges Only)

Hall of Cities: Atlanta, Boston, Anaheim

12:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Exhibitor Move-In

Exhibit Hall - Cypress Ballroom

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Clarity Under Pressure: The Stress Reset for Workers' Compensation Leaders

Crystal Ballroom J1

What if the biggest factor shaping decisions in the workers' compensation system isn't policy, process, or training—but chronic stress? In this immersive and engaging session, participants will move, breathe, and experience evidence-based mind-body practices that demonstrate how stress can be regulated in real time. Rather than listening to a lecture, attendees will experience a powerful reset—discovering the difference between operating under pressure and leading with clarity. Attendees will leave with practical tools to improve performance, communication, and well-being both at work and in life.

Nelson Gonzalez, *Executive Director, Rehab Without Walls Neuro Rehabilitation*

1:30 pm – 4:00 pm Course #100

E. Earle Zehmer National Moot Court Competition Quarterfinal and Semi-Final Rounds

Grand Ballrooms 11-14

Presented by the National Association of Workers' Compensation Judiciary and the Workers' Compensation Institute, with special thanks to Judge Jacqueline Steele, Tracey Hyde, Amie DeGuzman, and Elaura Hodgetts.

Participants:

Baylor University School of Law (Texas)

Chicago-Kent College of Law (Illinois)

Cooley Law School (Florida)

Florida International University College of Law (Florida)

Florida State University College of Law (Florida)

Fredric G. Levin College of Law, University of Florida (Florida)

Jacksonville University College of Law (Florida)

Michigan State University College of Law (Michigan)

Mississippi College School of Law (Mississippi)

Regent University School of Law (Virginia)

Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law (Arizona)

Shepard Broad College of Law, Nova Southeastern University (Florida)

Southern University Law Center (Louisiana)

St. Mary's School of Law (Texas)

University of Miami School of Law (Florida)

University of Houston Law Center (Texas)

William & Mary Law School, College of William & Mary (Virginia)

4:00 pm – 5:30 pm

Founders' Welcome Reception

Palms Ballroom Corridor

Kick off the event by joining General Chair Jim McConaughay, Program Chair Steve Rissman, and the WCI Board of Advisors for a warm and engaging welcome reception. Connect with session speakers and fellow attendees, renew old friendships, and build new professional relationships in a relaxed setting. Complimentary beer and wine will be served.

Professional Mediation Conference

Presented by the Professional Mediation Institute



Professional
Mediation
Institute

Sponsored by:

Cattie & Gonzalez, PLLC

HR Law, PA

Hamilton, Miller & Birthisel, LLP

Law Offices of David W. Stillson, PA

Morgan & Morgan, PA

9:00 am – 5:10 pm

Grand Ballroom 8A

Open to All Conference Attendees

9:00 am – 9:50 am Course #200

Games People Play – An insight into what actually occurs during a motion to enforce hearing.

(General/Ethics)

This is a program that affects all stakeholders in the workers' compensation system. All the panel members, and moderator, are currently sitting judges of compensation claims. With the rise of Motions to Enforce Mediation Settlement Agreements, the judges will share what they are witnessing as the things that are needed in the motion, and what is necessary to defend it. They will also share many of the reasons they see that result in the motion needing to be filed, to begin, and some suggestions on how to eliminate the need to have to either file the motion or defend it.

Moderator:

Gregory Johnsen, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Speakers:

Ray Holley, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Jeffrey Jacobs, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Robert Arthur, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Sylvia Medina-Shore, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

10:00 am – 10:50 am Course #201

Rules, Rules, Rules-Set In Stone?

(General/Ethics)

Mediators are governed by many Rules and Statutes. This panel will present an overview of the Rules and Statutes which impact mediations on a daily basis. It will address the importance of a Mediator being cognizant of not only the applicable rules but aware at all times of the ethical ramifications potentially occurring when strict application is not required. It will explain the benefit of a Mediator being sensitive to a party asking the Mediator to straddle or cross the line and for the Mediator to be thoroughly familiar with the Rules as well as the applicable MEAC opinions.

Moderator:

Michael Imber, *Attorney, Mediator, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Speakers:

Ken Kugler, *Mediator*

Scott Silver, *Attorney, Silver, Bass & Brams, P.A.*

Phil Thompson, *Attorney/Mediator/Arbitrator, Thompson & Thomas, P.A. and MediationWorks*

11:00 am – 11:50 am Course #202

Writing Workshop: Creative Writing to Save a Settlement

(General)

The fine print can make or break a settlement. Participants will learn by considering example scenarios and discussing proposed agreement language in this interactive training. The presentation will discuss the potential loss of an agreement without adequate written detail, explore how additional terms may break a deadlock, and stress the importance of ensuring all mediation parties understand agreement terms. This workshop will equip mediators with additional tools to help finalize even the toughest settlement agreement.

Moderator:

Kate Marshman, *Mediator, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Speakers:

Karl Labertew, *Circuit Civil Mediator, Appellate Mediator, Supreme Court Qualified Arbitrator, Mediate First, Inc.*

Eric Hires, *Attorney, Mediator, The Law Office of Eric V. Hires, LLC*

Professional Mediation Conference (Continued)

Grand Ballroom 8A

12:20 pm – 1:10 pm Course #203

Mock Mediation

(General)

If you have ever wondered how other mediators conduct their opening statement, handle difficult parties, or reach a successful resolution in a complex set of disputed facts you need to come observe and participate in this mock mediation. Take notes on how this panel navigates the various mock mediation scenarios in this training session. Be ready to speak up and provide suggestions to the group in this interactive training.

Moderator:

Kate Marshman, *Mediator, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Speakers:

Karl Labertew, *Circuit Civil Mediator, Appellate Mediator, Supreme Court Qualified Arbitrator, Mediate First, Inc.*

Tom Glick, *Attorney, Mediator, Center For Conflict Resolution*

Adam Ross, *Mediator, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Veronica Jackson, *Principal/Mediator, Magnolia Mediations, LLC*

1:20 pm – 2:10 pm Course #204

Help Me Help You! - The Diversity Check List

(Diversity/General)

This informative breakout will address some of the overt and covert biases that we all face when dealing with others. The presenters will share some suggestions and personal war stories designed to focus on typical issues facing the mediator, attorney litigators and adjusters to help reach an agreement, without offending a party or participant and which satisfies the emotional and cultural needs of the parties.

Moderator:

Celia Mendez, *Shareholder, Moreland & Mendez, PA*

Speakers:

Andy Bucher, *Mediator, The Mediation Group*

Neil Ambekar, *Attorney, Conroy Simberg*

David Schweiger, *Attorney, Franks, Koenig, & Neuwelt*

2:20 pm – 3:10 pm

AI and Technology Update

Course #205

(Technology/General)

This very popular and informative program addresses some of the most perplexing and necessary tools you'll need to think about, utilize and add to your tool box of assistive devices that are entering the world of litigation. The presenters will discuss some of the latest updates in technology, how they are used and abused in the area of law and how the participants can best incorporate AI into both their professional and personal lives.

Moderator:

Billy Wieland, *Attorney, Wieland & DeLattre, P.A.*

Speakers:

Christine Harter, *Attorney, Mediator, Mediation & Dispute Resolution Center*

Renee Thompson, *Mediator, Upchurch Watson White & Max*

3:20 pm – 4:10 pm Course #206

Complex Legal/Medical Minefields that Mediators Tread to Avoid Overstepping the Role of the Attorneys

(General/Ethics)

Oftentimes we are in the position of explaining complex legal and/or medical matters to the parties. When that occurs we are walking a tightrope of not invading the attorneys' responsibilities to their clients as well as trying not to give legal advice. This program offers strategies on making the complex simple and navigating the landmines of not giving legal advice.

Moderator:

Tom Glick, *Attorney, Mediator, Center For Conflict Resolution*

Speakers:

Michael Imber, *Attorney, Mediator, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Paul Westcott, *Mediator, Wescott Mediations*

Eric Hires, *Attorney, Mediator, The Law Office of Eric V. Hires, LLC*

4:20 pm – 5:10 pm Course #207

What Would Dale Carnegie Do? Achieving Success at Mediation

(General)

Do the typical strategies employed by litigators during a trial, apply efficiently in the Mediation arena? Is there a benefit to problem solving together with the opposing party rather than treating the other side as an enemy? How would Dale Carnegie react to Attorneys that almost never respond to phone calls, texts or emails from the OC? Is an apology merely a sign of weakness? Are there specific issues that would benefit both parties if the attorneys worked together?

Moderator:

Stuart Suskin, *Mediator, Stuart F. Suskin Mediations*

Speakers:

Jamey Rodgers, *Attorney, HR Law, P.A.*

Sean O'Connor, *Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver & Stern, P.A.*

Holley Akers, *Attorney, O'Rourke & Akers, P.A.*

John Brooks, *Mediator, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

The following sessions have been pre-recorded and will be available to attendees on the WCI website (www.wci360.com) after the conclusion of the conference.

Ethics Update (General/Ethics)

What's the latest from MEAC? Robin Caral Shaw and Tom Glick return to cover some of the most interesting and useful decisions and how these decisions may impact your practice.

Speakers: Robin Caral Shaw, Tom Glick

Third Party Funding Update (General)

Third Party Funding is one of the fastest growing, innovative and consequential additions to the litigation toolbox of many complex commercial and personal injury litigation attorneys. Mark Popolizio does a masterful job of explaining the origins, the uses and latest legislation responses throughout the country, in a very lively and entertaining manner.

Speaker: Mark Popolizio

The New Rules of Procedure- UPDATED- What are they? How are Workers' Comp Cases Impacted? (General)

Are you aware of the latest changes to the Rules of Civil Procedure, adopted by the Florida Supreme Court, which will affect all civil litigating attorneys? Will they affect Workers' Compensation litigation?

Speaker: Karl Labertew

Monday, August 24

Official
Wi-Fi
Sponsor



Wi-Fi: Marriott Convention Level
Wi-Fi Password: BAUERFEIND

6:30 am – 1:00 am

Shuttle bus service between the overflow hotel and the Marriott World Center is available. Refer to parking map & shuttle schedule. All parking onsite.

7:00 am – 8:30 am

Prayer Breakfast with Pastor Ron Simmons and the Designers Way Praise Team

Crystal Ballroom H

Prayer Breakfast Sponsors:

Ambassador Service Group
Austill, Lewis, Pipkin & Maddox, PC
Carlisle Medical
Convergence Care
CorHome, LLC
Employer Defense Group, LLP
NeuLife Rehabilitation
Select Marketing SVS
Sunrise Medical Solutions, Inc.
VONA Case Management

Get ready for a powerful morning at the WCI Prayer Breakfast!

Join WCI and the Diversity and Talent Alliance (DATA) as we welcome Pastor Ron Simmons of Designer's Way Christian Church, along with the dynamic DWAY Praise Team, for an unforgettable time of worship and inspiration. Pastor Ron and special guest Dr. Clarie Muselman will deliver a lively and thought-provoking message on how faith and biblical principles intersect with personal branding, leadership, and purpose-driven success. Discover how your spiritual foundation can elevate your workplace influence, enhance your quality of life, and position you to lead with clarity and confidence. Separate registration is required, and tickets can be purchased for \$67 at www.wci360.com/prayer-breakfast/. If you are interested in sponsoring the Prayer Breakfast, please go to www.wci360.com/sponsorships/.

You don't want to miss this powerful gathering of faith, purpose, and leadership!

DATA is a not-for-profit organization, and its mission is to develop a pipeline that creates and sustains a diverse workforce and inspires transformative change through partnership, education, and mentorship. To learn more about DATA, go to www.diversityandtalent.org.

Ron Simmons, Senior Pastor / President, Designer's Way Christian Church / R.J Simmons Group LLC

Claire Muselman, COO / Professor, WorkersCompensation.com / Drake University

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Conference Registration and Information

Convention Level

8:45 am – 12:00 pm

Opening Session and Keynote Addresses

Palms Ballroom – Canary

8:45 am – 9:00 am

Acknowledgments and Recognition

9:00 am – 9:05 am

National Anthem

Vocalist, Elicia Smith

9:05 am – 9:15 am

Welcome from WCI and Volunteer of the Year Award

Andrew Sabolic, Executive Director, Workers' Compensation Institute, Inc.

9:15 am – 9:25 am

ALM / PropertyCasualty 360 Workers' Risk Management Award for Excellence Presentation

ALM | PROPERTYCASUALTY360



sedgwick

Winners of the PropertyCasualty360 Workers' Compensation Risk Management Award for Excellence sponsored by Safety National and Sedgwick will be announced.

Elana Jefferson, Editor-in-Chief, PropertyCasualty360.com

9:25 am – 9:40 am

Kids' Chance of Florida and Give Kids The World Presentations

Charitable giving is a pillar of the WCI conference. Come and see how the workers' compensation community "Gives Back" to these two wonderful organizations.

Doug Clark, AVP Client Services, Sedgwick

Jenna Sutton, Vice President, Medical Management & Re-Employment

Tammy Boyd, Regional Business Development, TRISTAR Insurance Group

9:40 am – 9:50 am

Special Tribute

9:50 am – 10:45 am

Course #300

Industry Keynote Address - The Next Decade of Risk – Are You Built to Survive It?

In today's rapidly evolving business environment, "future-proofing" has become a popular goal—but for many organizations, it remains more aspiration than reality. The pace of technological change, particularly the rise of artificial intelligence, is fundamentally reshaping how businesses operate, how risk is identified and managed, and what operational readiness truly

Opening Session & Keynote Address (Continued)

Palms Ballroom – Canary

requires. The question is no longer whether disruption is coming—it's whether your organization is built to adapt fast enough.

In this keynote session, our panel will challenge conventional thinking about risk management in the next decade. Drawing on real-world insights across claims, insurance, and large-scale operations, they will explore how AI, workforce shifts, litigation trends, and business model disruption are converging to redefine success.

This session will move beyond theory to focus on practical implications: where current strategies are likely to fail, how leading organizations are rethinking operational readiness, and what actions risk leaders must take now to remain relevant.

Because the real risk isn't disruption—it's being unprepared for it.

Moderators:

Kimberly George, *Global Head, Innovation & Product Development, Sedgwick*

Mark Walls, *VP for Communications & Strategic Analysis, Safety National*

Speakers:

Pamela Brann, *Senior Vice President of Risk Management, Cast & Crew*

Shaun Jackson, *Executive Director, Risk and Insurance, Panda Restaurant Group*

Hunter Johnson, *Director of Risk Management, AT&T*

10:45 am – 12:00 pm Course #301

Celebrity Keynote Address by Daymond John

Sponsored by:



Daymond John is an award-winning entrepreneur, global brand builder, bestselling author, and star of ABC's hit Emmy-winning series *Shark Tank*. Founder and CEO of the iconic lifestyle brand FUBU, John's journey began with a \$100,000 mortgage on his mother's home and a vision built from a basement. That vision grew into a global fashion powerhouse generating over \$6 billion in product sales.

In this inspiring and practical keynote, John shares powerful lessons on branding, marketing, leadership, and resilience drawn from his own entrepreneurial rise and decades of experience working with top companies and celebrities through his consulting firm, The Shark Group. Audiences will gain actionable insights on turning limited resources into competitive advantage, communicating authentically with customers, and building businesses that scale.

Engaging, motivating, and real, Daymond John's keynote empowers audiences to think bigger, move faster, and transform challenges into opportunities.

9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Headshot Lounge

Outside the entrance to the Exhibit Hall - Cypress Ballroom

Sponsored by:



Upgrade your professional image at the Conference Headshot Lounge. Stop by to receive a high-quality, professionally taken headshot—perfect for LinkedIn profiles, company bios, speaking engagements, and marketing materials. This convenient on-site experience makes it easy to refresh your photo without missing conference activities. Whether you're networking, speaking, or advancing your career, a polished headshot helps you make a strong first impression. Don't miss this opportunity to put your best face forward.

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

"Comp Time" Diner

Purchase food and beverages in the Exhibit Hall. Visit the "Comp Time" Diner... grab & go, or sit and network with clients and exhibitors!

10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Exhibit Hall Is OPEN

Exhibit Hall - Cypress Ballroom

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Puppy and Kitten Cuddle Zone

Exhibit Hall - Cypress Ballroom

Puppies and kittens and stress relief! Recharge, relax, and play with furry friends in need of love and a home.

Cuddle Zone Sponsored by:

ConservCare, Inc.
National Provider of Home Care Services



1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #302

E. Earle Zehmer National Moot Court Competition - Final Arguments

Palms Ballroom – Canary

Judged by the Florida First District Court of Appeal. The subject of this competition is a workers' compensation topic of significance. Security requirements will be in place. All attendees are requested to be seated at least 15 minutes before the session begins. To watch our live stream of the finals, go to you www.youtube.com/@wci360.

7:00 pm – 11:00 pm

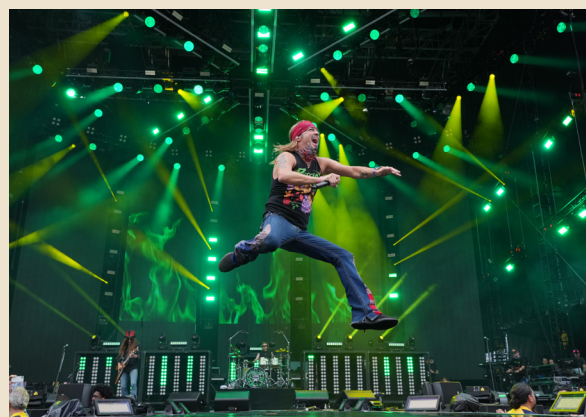
Reception and Entertainment

Palms Ballrooms - Sabal, Sago, Royal

Get ready for an unforgettable night as music icon **Bret Michaels** takes the stage to deliver a high-energy performance of all killer smash hits for an event you don't want to miss. Whether he's selling out stadiums or headlining hit TV shows, Bret Michaels has brought his iconic energy and star power to over three generations of loyal fans. As one of music's most legendary singers and songwriters, Michaels counts *Every Rose Has Its Thorn*, *Go That Far*, *Nothing But A Good Time* and *Something To Believe In* as part of his robust catalog of mega-hits.

The Hooligans will be the opening band performing British rock from the 60s - 90s.

Casual attire. Beverages and heavy hors d'oeuvres. Adults only, please.



2026 Roger L. Williams National Regulators College

**Presented by the Southern Association of Workers' Compensation
Administrators and the Self-Insurance Guaranty Funds of America**



Self-Insurance Guaranty Funds of America

Separate Registration & Payment Is Required.

Register at: www.sawca.org/events/the-college/.

Open Only To State Regulators, Officials and Legislators.

7:45 am – 6:00 pm

Hall of Cities: New York, New Orleans

7:45 am – 8:30 am

Breakfast and Registration

8:30 am – 8:35 am

Welcome

Frank McKay, *Appellate Judge and Director, Georgia State Board of Workers' Compensation*

Mark Formby, *Chairman, Mississippi Workers' Compensation Commission*

8:35 am – 9:30 am

Access to Care

Access to care isn't what it used to be...between scheduling challenges, long-distance facilities, an evolving healthcare landscape, the goal of timely and appropriate care designed to return the employee to work is seemingly less and less achievable. Join the discussion as we match possible solutions with known problems.

Scott Wilhoit, *Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Workers' Claims*

Heather Jordan, *Executive Deputy Director, NM Workers' Compensation Administration*

9:50 am – 10:45 am Course #300

**Industry Keynote Address - The Next Decade of Risk –
Are You Built to Survive It?**

Palms Ballroom – Canary

In today's rapidly evolving business environment, "future-proofing" has become a popular goal—but for many organizations, it remains more aspiration than reality. The pace of technological change, particularly the rise of artificial intelligence, is fundamentally reshaping how businesses operate, how risk is identified and managed, and what operational readiness truly requires. The question is no longer whether disruption is coming—it's whether your organization is built to adapt fast enough.

In this keynote session, our panel will challenge conventional thinking about risk management in the next decade. Drawing on real-world insights across claims, insurance, and large-scale operations, they will explore how AI, work-force shifts, litigation trends, and business model disruption are converging to redefine success.

This session will move beyond theory to focus on practical implications: where current strategies are likely to fail, how leading organizations are rethinking operational readiness, and what actions risk leaders must take now to remain relevant.

Because the real risk isn't disruption—it's being unprepared for it.

Moderators:

Kimberly George, *Global Head, Innovation & Product Development, Sedgwick*

Mark Walls, *VP for Communications & Strategic Analysis, Safety National*

Speakers:

Pamela Brann, *Senior Vice President of Risk Management, Cast & Crew*

Shaun Jackson, *Executive Director, Risk and Insurance, Panda Restaurant Group*

Hunter Johnson, *Director of Risk Management, AT&T*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Mental / PTSD

Gordon Horn, *National Director of Clinical Outcomes Services, Sevita*

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

**Lunch - Provided to Regulators College Students and
Presenters**

2026 Roger L. Williams National Regulators College (Continued)

Hall of Cities: New York & New Orleans

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Mental / PTSD ... What is Happening in States Regarding WC

Hosted by David Benedict (NCCI), Industry and Regulatory Officials provide a discussion of the associated challenges related to Mental Health/PTSD and the evolving statutes and legal decisions driving the changes.

Moderator:

David Benedict, *Executive Director of Regulatory Business Management, NCCI*

2:30 pm – 4:30 pm Course #1800

Annual National Regulators Roundtable

Presented by the Southern Association of Workers' Compensation Administrators (SAWCA)

Crystal Ballroom G1

The National Regulators Roundtable brings together regulators from throughout the country representing more than half the nation to discuss challenges, concerns and issues facing individual jurisdictions in the oversight of the ever-changing workers' compensation industry. It is a forum where regulators share lessons learned and seek timely answers to their most pressing issues. This national forum of state leaders will be open to all WCI attendees representing a unique opportunity for participants and audience alike.

Moderator:

Frank McKay, *Appellate Judge and Director, Georgia State Board of Workers' Compensation*

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

NAWCJ and SAWCA Reception

Grand Ballrooms 1-2

National Workers' Compensation Judiciary College

Presented by the National Association of
Workers' Compensation Judiciary, Inc.



**Registration Is Required To Attend
The National Workers' Compensation
Judiciary College. See www.nawcj.org.**

You Must Be An Adjudicator or Regulator To Attend.

8:00 am – 6:00 pm

Grand Ballrooms 4-6

8:00 am – 8:50 am

Registration

8:50 am – 9:00 am

Welcome and Introductions

9:00 am – 9:50 am

Practical Safety for Judges and Their Families

This presentation outlines essential security considerations for judges, judicial employees, and their families in home, office, and travel settings. It covers both physical and cyber safety, including risk awareness, protective planning, and how to recognize and respond to threats and active attacks. The session will also discuss contingency planning for dealing with an incident after it occurs.

Jim Brinson, *Deputy Director, Mississippi Office of Homeland Security*

10:00 am – 11:00 am

Evidence - What Does it Matter? A Panel Discussion

This panel explores the real-world impact of evidentiary rules on judicial decision-making and case outcomes. Moderated by an experienced facilitator, the discussion brings together two trial judges and two appellate judges—one trial judge and one appellate judge from jurisdictions that operate under a formal evidence code, and one trial judge and one appellate judge from jurisdictions that do not. Drawing on their respective perspectives, panelists will examine cases from their jurisdictions in which evidentiary rulings determined or materially influenced the outcome of the litigation. If time permits, the panel will also consider hypothetical scenarios and discuss whether, and how, outcomes might differ depending on the presence or absence of codified rules of evidence.

Through comparative insights and practical examples, the session will illuminate what evidentiary rules do in practice—and whether they truly matter.

Moderator:

Michael Alvey, *Chairman, Kentucky Workers' Compensation Board*

Speakers:

Frank McKay, *Appellate Judge and Director, Georgia State Board of Workers' Compensation*

D. Edward Wise, *Managing Deputy Commissioner, Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission*

Amanda Luedtke, *Judge, Wisconsin Division of Hearings and Appeals*

Jacquelyn Newman, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

11:10 am – 12:00 pm

Complexity of PTSD and the Injured Worker

This presentation examines the diagnosis of PTSD and how it may be recognized as a work-related injury through case examples and application of diagnostic criteria. It explores the condition's complexity, including long-term considerations and lifelong impacts. The session also discusses how PTSD can interact with and complicate other workplace injuries.

Gordon Horn, *National Director of Clinical Outcomes Services, Sevita*

12:00 pm – 12:40 pm

Annual Business Meeting & Lunch

Grand Ballrooms 1-2

National Workers' Compensation Judiciary College (Continued)

Grand Ballrooms 4 – 6

12:40 pm – 1:30 pm

Comparative Law Panel

It is always interesting to learn how other jurisdictions' policies and procedures vary from ours. The Comparative Law Panel is a perennial NAWCJ favorite where assembled adjudicators get a view of some of the substantive and procedural similarities and differences in states' workers' compensation laws. This panel will discuss the different agency structures, hearing processes, appellate processes, and settlement process, as well as the approaches states take in addressing common issues confronted by workers' compensation adjudicators. Audience participation expands the scope of the panelists' perspectives, resulting in, what is always, a very exciting session.

Shannon Bruno Bishop, *Judge, Louisiana Works, Office of Workers' Compensation*

Cathy Surbeck, *Commissioner, Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Appeal Board*

Sylvia Medina-Shore, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Laura Beasley, *Administrative Law Judge, Commonwealth of Kentucky Department of Workers' Claims*

2:00 pm – 2:50 pm

Tips for Opinion Writing to Avoid Reversal

This session involves identifying common mistakes, errors, and pitfalls, in decisions and orders issued by adjudicators. The panel will provide suggestions for writing more effective decisions and creating/preserving the appellate record.

Michael Alvey, *Chairman, Kentucky Workers' Compensation Board*

Timothy Conner, *Presiding Judge, TN Workers' Comp. Appeals Board, Tennessee Workers' Compensation Appeals Board*

3:00 pm – 3:50 pm

Judging in the Moment (Session 1)

Attendees will view scripted videos of mock hearings with various scenarios commonly seen in workers' compensation disputes. The facilitators will then lead lively a discussion with the attendees to examine ways to address the issues presented in the in the videos.

Moderator:

Pamela Johnson, *Judge, Tennessee Court of Workers' Compensation Claims*

4:00 pm – 4:50 pm

Judging in the Moment (Session 2)

Attendees will view scripted videos of mock hearings with various scenarios commonly seen in workers' compensation disputes. The facilitators will then lead lively a discussion with the attendees to examine ways to address the issues presented in the in the videos.

Moderator:

Pamela Johnson, *Judge, Tennessee Court of Workers' Compensation Claims*

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

NAWCJ and SAWCA Reception

Grand Ballrooms 1-2

Professional Mediation Conference

Presented by The Professional Mediation Institute



Professional
Mediation
Institute

Sponsored by:

Cattie & Gonzalez, PLLC

HR Law, PA

Hamilton, Miller & Birthisel, LLP

Law Offices of David W. Stillson, PA

Morgan & Morgan, PA

9:00 am – 12:40 pm

Grand Ballroom 8A

Open to All Conference Attendees

9:00 am – 9:50 am Course #400

How Adjusters and Attorneys Can Optimize Mediation Outcomes (General)

This informative and entertaining session will address some of the most effective tips and strategies that attorneys and claims professional employ to reach a settlement that meets the needs of the parties and leaves the participants feeling satisfied with the outcome, exercising self determination and maintaining positive relationships for future dealings.

Moderator:

Adam Ross, *Mediator, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Speakers:

Angela Flynn, *Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver & Stern, P.A.*

Rachel Dobson, *Attorney, Morgan & Morgan, P.A.*

David Stillson, *Attorney, Mediator, Arbitrator, Law Offices of David W. Stillson, PA*

10:00 am – 10:50 am Course #401

Don't Sugar Coat It! Tell Us What You Really Think

(General/Professionalism)

This breakout promises to be a very lively, fun, deep dive into what the attorneys genuinely think of the mediation process, the mediators, the OC and how the process would and could work better, if only anyone bothered to ask!

Moderator:

Stuart Suskin, *Mediator, Stuart F. Suskin Mediations*

Speakers:

Glen Wieland, *Attorney, Wieland & DeLattre, P.A.*

Don Bennett, *Attorney, Banker Lopez Gassler*

Ken Kugler, *Mediator*

Gina Jacobs, *Attorney, Hamilton, Miller & Birthisel*

11:00 am – 12:40 pm Course #402

Practical Medicare/MSA claims strategies – what to know to keep your clients compliant, reduce costs, and settle claims (General)

The Dynamic Duo of Mark and Rafael are back to educate and demystify MSP/MSA compliance using real life case squibs to help practitioners identify the issues, understand their compliance obligations, and navigate CMS's process to minimize client liability, including potential Section 111 penalties, Treasury Actions, "double damages" lawsuits, potential loss of claimant benefits. This interactive session will include focus on new CMS updates directly impacting WC claims, including CMS's new TPOC/WCMSA reporting rules and \$0 WCMSAs, along with how Section 111 reporting impacts claims, Medicare and Medicare Advantage lien claims, and MSA cost reduction. Everyone should attend this program to learn some valuable steps to help keep themselves and their clients out of trouble with CMS, reduce costs, and settle claims.

Mark Popolizio, *VP, MSP Compliance and Policy, Verisk*

Rafael Gonzalez, *Attorney, Cattie & Gonzalez, PLLC*

The following sessions have been pre-recorded and will be available to attendees on the WCI website (www.wci360.com) after the conclusion of the conference.

Ethics Update (General/Ethics)

What's the latest from MEAC? Robin Caral Shaw and Tom Glick return to cover some of the most interesting and useful decisions and how these decisions may impact your practice.

Speakers: Robin Caral Shaw, Tom Glick

Third Party Funding Update (General)

Third Party Funding is one of the fastest growing, innovative and consequential additions to the litigation toolbox of many complex commercial and personal injury litigation attorneys. Mark Popolizio does a masterful job of explaining the origins, the uses and latest legislation responses throughout the country, in a very lively and entertaining manner.

Speaker: Mark Popolizio

The New Rules of Procedure- UPDATED- What are they? How are Workers' Comp Cases Impacted? (General)

Are you aware of the latest changes to the Rules of Civil Procedure, adopted by the Florida Supreme Court, which will affect all civil litigating attorneys? Will they affect Workers' Compensation litigation?

Speaker: Karl Labertew

Risk Managers Breakout

1:00 pm – 3:10 pm

Grand Ballroom 7A

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #500

AI in Risk and Claims Decision-Making

Artificial intelligence is no longer an emerging concept in Workers' Compensation—it is actively reshaping how risk and claims leaders identify exposure, intervene earlier, and manage claim complexity in an environment defined by rising medical costs, litigation pressure, and operational strain. This interactive risk managers roundtable will explore how organizations are practically using AI today to improve decision making across Workers' Compensation, with perspective drawn from Auto and General Liability programs. The discussion will focus on moving beyond traditional reporting to actionable decision support, including AI enabled trend analysis, early risk identification, claim complexity prediction, and return to work optimization. Panelists will share real world examples of how AI supports a hypothesis driven approach to risk and claims management—starting with a clear decision to improve, testing assumptions through focused pilots, and measuring outcomes with discipline. Attendees will gain insight into how AI helps align safety, claims, and operational priorities, while also addressing governance, transparency, and trust expectations in a highly regulated insurance environment. Participants will leave with practical use cases, governance considerations, and immediately applicable ideas they can adapt within their own Workers' Compensation programs.

Moderator:

Laura Noble, *Senior Vice President, Gallagher Bassett*

Speakers:

Jill Alfano, *Claims Manager, Risk & Insurance, Victoria's Secret*

Michael Fountain, *VP, Safety & Risk Management, Dycom Industries, Inc.*

Bill O'Brien, *Workers' Compensation Claims Manager, Kelly Services*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #501

Risk Perspectives from Chief Claims Officers

For the first time, three Chief Claim Officers from the largest third-party administrators come together to discuss how they view the commercial insurance claims from their perspective. This session will be a provocative insight into how leaders manage their risk portfolios and mitigate program perils that their clients face.

Moderator:

Steve Figliuolo, *Principal Program Lead - Claims, Chick-fil-A, Inc.*

Speakers:

Max Koonce, *Chief Claims Officer, Sedgwick*

Scott Westman, *SVP/Chief Claim Officer, Lodestar Claims & Risk Services*

Irina Simpson, *Executive Vice President – Workers' Compensation / Gallagher Bassett*

Adjuster Breakout

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Magnolia Ballrooms 4-6

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #600

Adjuster of the Future

Looking ahead, the most successful adjusters will embrace a hybrid skill set—combining deep insurance expertise and sound judgment with the ability to effectively leverage AI tools. While the profession continues to evolve, core qualities like expertise, integrity, and discernment will remain essential. The future of adjusting belongs to those who adopt technology thoughtfully, ensuring every claim is handled with fairness, skill, and professionalism.

Moderator:

Kara Sepulveda, *President, Head of Property & Casualty TPA Claims, Davies North America*

Speakers:

Kristin Smith, *Vice President of Business Development, Sedgwick*

Nicole Jermin, *Strategic Claims Consultant, Brown & Brown*

Emily Cameron, *Head of Product and Customer Success, Crosstie*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #601

Actors Only Use Scripts - Beyond Templates

Unlock the power hidden inside your conversations. This session dives into how basic templates and smarter questioning can transform surface-level details into meaningful insights that drive better claim outcomes and interactions with injured workers.

Moderator:

Nancy Brightwell, *Claims Team Manager, Acrisure Claims Services*

Speakers:

Adela Daugherty, *Workers' Compensation Manager, Walmart Claims Services*

Carol Corzo, *Senior Claims Manager, Summit Consulting*

Holly Krell, *Senior Claims Consultant, The Baldwin Group*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #602

Empathy vs. Enabling: Setting Expectations

This panel will explore how adjusters can demonstrate compassion while maintaining accountability, setting expectations, and driving timely resolution. Attendees will gain practical strategies to support the various customers who are engaged, without losing control of the claim.

Moderator:

Pamela Last, *Divisional AVP Claims, Summit, Inc.*

Speakers:

Marissa Gillock, *Claims Supervisor, Publix Super Markets Inc.*

Lisa Shoaff, *Workers' Compensation Supervisor, CCMSI*

Sarah Welcomer, *Sr. Strategic Business Unit System Support Analyst, Liberty Mutual Insurance Company*

Workplace Safety and Health Breakout

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Magnolia Ballrooms 13-15

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #700

Challenges and Opportunities in Employee Injury Investigations

Join us for an insightful panel session as three industry experts navigate the complex landscape of employee injury investigations within the context of workers' compensation. This session will delve into the challenges faced by employers, insurers, and claims professionals in accurately assessing workplace injuries, ensuring compliance, and safeguarding employee rights. Panelists will discuss innovative investigative techniques, and adaptive strategies that can streamline processes and improve outcomes. Attendees will gain valuable insights into harnessing technological advancements, psycho-social insights and collaborative efforts to optimize investigations and leverage opportunities for more efficient, expedient and fair resolutions in worker injury claims.

Moderator:

Jim Smith, *National Risk Control, Regional Leader, Arthur J. Gallagher*

Speakers:

Robert Hartley, *Director of Risk Management & Purchasing, Columbia County Schools*

Jim Van Duzen, *Sr. Risk and Safety Representative, Paychex*

Scott Johnson, *Risk and Safety Manager, Paychex*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #701

Calculated Confidence: How AI is Revolutionizing Risk Reduction

Artificial Intelligence is no longer a concept of the future—it's already shaping our industry through tools, services, and decision-making processes. This one-hour session provides a clear, practical overview of how AI is being adopted in the safety and insurance industries, which systems matter most, and how organizations are integrating these tools into daily operations. We'll

explore the current state of AI adoption, its potential to improve decision-making, shorten claim durations, enhance workplace safety, and boost efficiency. At the same time, we'll address key challenges like data privacy, bias, ethics, and organizational readiness. As professionals at the crossroads of people, data, and operations, we have a unique opportunity to leverage AI's transformative power. This session aims to provide the insights you need to make informed, strategic decisions about incorporating AI into your programs.

Moderator:

Jim Smith, *National Risk Control, Regional Leader, Arthur J. Gallagher*

Speakers:

Normagene Dmytriw, *Risk Manager, Broward County Port Everglades*

Mike Sharkevich, *Area Vice President, Arthur J. Gallagher*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #702

Strategies to Prevent Heat-Related Claims and Reduce Costs Before Enforcement Hits: Turn Compliance into Cost Control: Master OSHA's New Heat Rule. Are You Ready?

This session focuses on OSHA's upcoming Heat Injury and Illness Prevention standard, expected by mid-2025, and its impact on employers, TPAs, and medical providers. The rule will require measures like monitoring, acclimatization, hydration schedules, and emergency protocols for heat exposure in indoor and outdoor settings. Compliance is reframed as an opportunity to reduce claims, control costs, and improve workers' compensation risk management. Attendees will explore national heat-related claim trends, analyze OSHA's proposed requirements, and learn strategies to connect safety controls with claim prevention and post-injury outcomes. Innovative tools like predictive analytics and environmental data dashboards will be introduced to anticipate claim spikes and enhance recovery. Participants will gain actionable resources, including a compliance checklist, heat dashboard templates, and an ROI calculator, to prepare for OSHA enforcement starting in 2025–2026.

Moderator:

Gary Lopez, *Senior Risk Control Consultant, Arthur J. Gallagher*

Speaker:

Rob Lemery, *Claim Supervisor, CCMSI*

OSHA 10-Hour Construction Industry Training

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Magnolia Ballroom 10

Moderator:

Mylene Kellerman, *Program Director, University of South Florida OSHA Training Institute Education Center*

Speaker:

Michelle Demarest, *Safety & Health Instructor, USF, OSHA Training Institute*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #800

Introduction to OSHA

This session covers the history and mission of OSHA, worker rights (including

how to file a complaint), and employer responsibilities. It teaches you how to read the "OSHA standards" and use them as a resource.

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #801

Focus Four Hazard: Falls

This session focuses on identifying fall hazards and using protection systems like guardrails, safety nets, and Personal Fall Arrest Systems (PFAS).

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #802

Focus Four Hazards : Falls + Stairways and Ladders

This session covers the second part of falls from elevations: detail-oriented safety rules for the proper use, inspection, and placement of ladders (like the 4-to-1 ratio) and the requirements for temporary stairways on job sites.

18th Annual National Workers' Compensation Review

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Grand Ballroom 8B (Entrance through corridor Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #900

Aligning Litigation Strategy, Defense Counsel, and Employer Outcomes

This panel will explore critical challenges in litigation and claims management that directly impact employers, insurers, and their bottom line. Panelists will examine how misplaced financial incentives, disincentives, and the ineffective use of workers' compensation resources can drive suboptimal outcomes. The discussion will address recurring concerns around attorney–client privilege and confidentiality, the employer or insured's right to select defense counsel, and how breakdowns in these areas can affect claim strategy. Attendees will gain insight into the downstream consequences of litigation decisions on experience modification (E-Mod) factors and premium costs, as well as practical approaches for identifying, addressing, and resolving problems—or perceived problems—with defense counsel. The session will focus on improving alignment, accountability, and transparency among employers, claims professionals, and litigation teams to achieve better outcomes and long-term cost control.

Moderator:

Nichole DuShane, *Litigation Manager, Summitt Holdings*

Speakers:

Becky Hillhouse, *Sr. Vice President, Head of Workers' Compensation Claims, Ascot Group*

Alan Pierce, *Attorney, Pierce, Pierce & Napolitano*

Melissa Spurlock, *Director Employee Safety & Work Related Injury, Select Medical Corporation*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #901

Causation Analysis: AI as a Tool for Structured, Defensive Medical Reasoning

Medical causation analysis is a frequent source of error in workers' compensation, often due to unstructured reasoning, cognitive bias, and confusion between medical and legal standards. This session focuses exclusively on causation analysis and examines how properly governed artificial intelligence can support disciplined, transparent, and defensible medical reasoning. Using established causation frameworks, including the AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Disease and Injury Causation, the panel explores how AI can assist with record synthesis, identification of competing causes, and consistency with accepted medical standards—while preserving professional judgment and ethical accountability.

Moderator:

Chris Brigham, *President, Brigham and Associates, Inc.*

Speakers:

Mark Melhorn, *Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Orthopedics, University of Kansas, School of Medicine-Wichita*

Alexander Almazan, *Attorney, Almazan Law*

Heidi Sellers, *Head of Claims Operations, Acrisure Claims Services*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #902

Stewardship of Truth in a World of Intelligent Machines – How Faith-Based Principles Guide the Implementation of AI into the Work Comp System

Artificial intelligence is not morally neutral when used in human decision-making systems. It amplifies incentives, shortcuts, and narratives. The central risk is not that AI is “evil,” but that it becomes a substitute for discernment—a false authority that sounds convincing while distancing us from truth, responsibility, and humility. What happens when we outsource judgment, responsibility, and conscience? Workers' compensation decisions directly affect human dignity, livelihoods, health, and family wellbeing. AI offers the attraction of efficiency, speed, and plausibility. However, when plausibility replaces truth, systems, even efficient systems, fail people.

Moderator:

Bill Pipkin, *Attorney, Austill, Lewis, Pipkin & Maddox, PC*

Speakers:

Chris Brigham, *President, Brigham and Associates, Inc.*

Desiree Render, *AVP National Technical Compliance, Sedgwick*

Mark Tainton, *SVP of Data Solutions, Wisedocs*

Diversity and Talent Breakout

Presented by the Diversity and Talent Alliance (DATA)



DATA is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to develop a pipeline that creates and sustains a diverse workforce and inspires transformative change through partnership, education, and mentorship. For sponsorship information, go to www.wci360.com/sponsorships/#dei.

DATA Sponsor:

McConaughay, Coonrod, Weaver and Stern, PA

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Crystal Ballroom H

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #1000

Safe in Your Hands: Trust, Accountability, and Ethical Conduct at Work

This session explores the role of trust as a foundational principal for industry professionals. Participants will examine how personal accountability values driven decision-making, and transparent communication directly impact ethical conduct in high stakes workplace environments. Through interactive discussion and practical reflection attendees will identify actionable strategies to strengthen integrity, navigate ethical challenges and foster cultures of psychological safety within their organization.

Ron Simmons, *Senior Pastor / President, Designer's Way Christian Church / R.J Simmons Group LLC*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #1001

AI and the Human Side of Workers' Compensation: Equipping Claims Professionals to Lead with Confidence in an AI-Enabled Environment

Artificial intelligence has quietly embedded itself into everyday life — and it is reshaping how injured workers engage with the claims process before they ever speak to a professional. This session equips claims professionals, adjusters, and industry leaders with a clear-eyed understanding of AI's role on both sides of the claim — empowering attendees to harness technology while strengthening, not replacing, the human connections that define excellent claims handling. Perspectives from emerging WC professionals will ground the discussion in the future of the workforce.

Nikki Jackson, *NA Head of Learning Strategy and Emerging Talent, Gallagher Bassett*

Ngozi Nnaji, *Principal, Ako Brokerage Services, LLC*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #1002

DATA Future Forum

The DATA Future Forum is a dynamic networking experience designed to connect emerging talent with professionals across the workers' compensation industry. This interactive session provides DATA Scholars with direct access to industry leaders representing carriers, TPAs, medical providers, and service partners. Through a structured, speed-networking format, participants engage in focused conversations that offer real insight into career pathways, industry trends, and professional growth opportunities. Scholars have the opportunity to share their goals, ask meaningful questions, and build connections with organizations shaping the future of the industry.

New for 2026, the Forum introduces a dual-track experience, aligning engagement with each scholar's career readiness. Some participants will connect with organizations exploring immediate hiring opportunities, while others will focus on networking, learning, and building long-term professional relationships. The DATA Future Forum reflects a shared commitment to developing the next generation of talent and strengthening the future of the workers' compensation industry.

Moderator:

Sabrina Mitchell, *Assistant Vice President, Old Republic Commercial Risk formerly PMA Companies*

Top-of-Mind from the C-Suite

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Crystal Ballroom J1

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #1100

Balancing Care and Cost: Medical Treatment Challenges in the Workers' Compensation System

This session examines some of the key challenges in delivering medical treatment within the workers' compensation system, with an emphasis on access to timely and appropriate care. It will explore how fee schedules and reimbursement processes may impact provider participation, and the administrative process. The discussion will also address how the regulatory framework can influence medical decision making, cost containment, and overall claim outcomes.

Moderator:

Max Koonce, *Chief Claims Officer, Sedgwick*

Speakers:

Ronda Hammond, *Director, Associate Risk Services, Ascension Health*

Josephine Copeland, *SVP Product Design and Strategy, Sedgwick*

Brittany O'Neil, *Chief Strategy Officer, Florida Sheriffs Risk Management Fund*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #1101

When Is It Work-Related? The Expanding Scope of Workers' Compensation Coverage

This session examines the expansion of workers' compensation coverage beyond traditional physical injuries, including mental health conditions and occupational disease presumptions. It will explore cancer and respiratory disease presumptions for public entity employers and the growing efforts to extend similar presumptions to other industries. The discussion will focus on how these changes alter causation standards and could shift costs for diseases and conditions not historically considered work related.

Moderator:

Suzanne McTeague, *Vice President Client Services, Sedgwick*

Speakers:

Tara Acton, *Director - Risk Management & Associate General Counsel, Lumen Technologies, Inc.*

Jen Hamelin, *Chief Claims Officer, Public Risk Innovation, Solutions, & Management (PRISM)*

Tim Stanger, *Senior Vice President, TPA Governance, Safety National*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #1102

Proving the Payback: Technology - Artificial Intelligence, Analytics, Modeling - and ROI usage in workers' compensation claims

This session examines how emerging technologies—including artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, and modeling tools—are being used in workers' compensation claims. The discussion will focus on practical applications such as claim triage, reserving, fraud detection, and workflow efficiency, with an emphasis on distinguishing measurable value from hype. Panelists will address how these tools can be evaluated and justified through a clear return on investment lens, including impacts on claim outcomes, operating costs, and resource allocation.

Moderator:

Suzanne McTeague, *Vice President Client Services, Sedgwick*

Speakers:

Vishy Padmanabhan, *Chief Transformation Officer, Sedgwick*

Luke Harrison, *President - Walmart Claim Services, Inc., Walmart*

Hunter Johnson, *Director of Risk Management, AT&T*

Physical Therapy Breakout

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Grand Ballrooms 13-14

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #1200

Words That Heal or Harm: How Communication Shapes Recovery, Claims, and Outcomes

In workers' compensation, words don't just document care, they shape the entire recovery journey. The language used by physical therapists, medical providers, and claims professionals can speed functional restoration or, unintentionally, reinforce fear, passivity, and disability. This session explores how communication, clinical decision-making, and early intervention intersect to influence outcomes in the first critical weeks following an injury. Participants will learn why early PT is not automatically better, unless it is delivered with the right approach, the right expectations, and the right messaging. We will examine how poor outcomes can often be predicted within the first two to three visits, and how strategic communication can shift the trajectory toward recovery rather than chronicity.

Michelle Despres, *Chief Operating Officer, PhysNet*

Marcos Iglesias, *Chief Medical Officer, AF Group*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #1201

The Next Frontier: AI, VR and Smarter Rehab Solutions

This panel presentation will cover current uses of AI in predictive analytics and process efficiency but primarily will focus on future applications in rehabilitation and medicine. Key themes include integrating AI with technologies like VR and haptics to detect inconsistencies, using digital imaging and AI for wound care with lessons from the field of dermatology, and exploring cost-saving implications. It will also address how AI could reshape rehabilitation by reducing in-person assessments and enabling exercise recommendations through predictive analytics. This presentation will be complemented by insights from experts outside of rehabilitation including employers and insurers providing their experiences and expectations.

Moderator:

Ashley Catapano, *Senior Director of Work Comp & Industrial, IvyRehab*

Speakers:

Josh Schuette, *Executive Director of National Work Comp Sales & Acct. Mgt., Brooks Rehabilitation*

Gia Sawko, *EVP, Chief Claims Officer, Signal Mutual*

Robert McIver, *Director of Clinical Technology, Brooks Rehabilitation*

Michael Choo, *Chief Medical Officer, Paradigm*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #1202

Better Oversight, Better Outcomes: Enhancing PT Care Through Strategic Case Review

Workers' compensation programs can only improve outcomes when clinical oversight moves beyond transactional checks and begins to influence the actual trajectory of recovery. This session examines what truly differentiates meaningful clinical oversight from the utilization-management models that rely on siloed metrics like visit counts, unit cost, or episode spend. Instead, the discussion reframes how payers can measure claim-level functional outcomes, clinical decision quality, and the overall direction of care. Participants will also gain insight into how clinicians experience clinical management programs and understand what feels supportive versus burdensome, what improves patient care versus what slows it down, and what makes participation efficient, practical, and aligned with real-world clinical workflows. By understanding these dynamics, payers, adjusters, case managers, medical providers, and attorneys can design programs that elevate care quality, reduce friction, and drive more consistent, evidence-based outcomes across the claim lifecycle.

Daniel Sanchez, *SVP Operations and Clinical Services, PhysNet*

Greg Hamlin, *Chief Claims Officer, Berkley Industrial Comp*

Robyn Lewis, *Regional Director of Work Strategies, Select Medical*

Crash Course in Workers' Compensation

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Magnolia Ballrooms 7-9

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #1300

Workers' Comp 101: Everything They Forgot to Tell You When You Got Hired

Workers' compensation didn't appear out of thin air — it was born from crisis, compromise, and a growing realization that the Industrial Revolution was breaking people faster than anyone wanted to admit. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, workplace injuries were epidemic, injured workers had little recourse beyond suing their employers, and the courts were stacked against them. Something had to give. This session takes new industry professionals back to the beginning — the “grand bargain” that traded workers' lawsuit rights for guaranteed benefits, the progressive-era political forces that pushed reform state by state, and why the system was designed the way it was. Understanding where workers' comp came from isn't just a history lesson — it's the key to understanding everything about how the system behaves today, and why your role in it matters.

Moderator:

Bob Wilson, *President, WorkCompCollege.com*

Speakers:

Melissa Jones, *Administrative Appeals Judge, US Department of Labor, Benefits Review Board*

Stuart Colburn, *Attorney, Downs & Stanford, P.C.*

Mark Pew, *Provost & Founding Partner of WorkCompCollege.com, WorkCompCollege.com*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #1301

It's COMPLICATED!

With 51 separate state systems—one for each state plus Washington, D.C., and 5 separate federal systems, it is easy to conclude that workers' compensation is complicated, as no two systems are exactly alike. This session brings together experienced professionals from the legal, medical, and claims arenas to explore why these systems differ and how those differences impact the way claims are managed across the country. The panel will examine key variations, including how claims are deemed compensable, how benefits are structured, and how care is delivered.

Moderator:

Rafael Gonzalez, *Attorney, Cattie & Gonzalez, PLLC*

Speakers:

Jill Rosenthal, *Chief Medical Officer, Zenith Insurance, a Fairfax Financial company*

Hon. Robert Rassp, *Presiding Judge, Division of Workers' Compensation*

Scotty Benton, *VP of Workers Compensation Practice, Sedgwick*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #1302

YOU Are the Most Powerful Variable in a Claims Outcome

This session explores the human side of Workers' Compensation. What if the most powerful variable in a claim's outcome is you? Every claim starts with a phone call. On the other end is a human being — scared, in pain, and wondering if anyone cares. How you show up in that moment determines everything that follows. In this session, you'll hear from someone who lived it as an injured worker, someone who was transformed by it as a first-week adjuster, and someone who works at an organization that built an entire culture around getting it right.

Moderator:

Yvonne Guibert, *Vice President, Education Strategy, Institutes Of Health*

Speakers:

Alil Kunica, *Director-Claims Management, Walt Disney World Resort*

Carlos Luna, *Founder, Luna LNQ*

Becky Curtis, *Director of Strategic Partnerships, Override/Take Courage Coaching*

David Chmiel, *SVP; North America Director of Claims, HUB International*

Breakout on Cost Containment Strategies

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Grand Ballroom 7B

(Entrance through corridor between Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #1400

The Rise of Boutique Pharmaceuticals

Pharmaceutical innovation has shifted dramatically over the past two decades—from developing truly novel therapies to proliferating “boutique” drugs that repackage existing medications through minor formulation changes, new combinations, or alternative delivery methods with little added clinical value. Despite being marketed as advancements, these products often carry significantly higher costs without improving outcomes, a problem that is especially pronounced in workers’ compensation. Because most state formularies do not regulate drugs at the strength or formulation level, boutique medications frequently bypass prior authorization and clinical review, driving unnecessary spend while lower-cost generics are overlooked. In this session, speakers will examine how boutique drugs enter and persist in formularies, the risks they pose, and practical strategies payers can use to manage them effectively without compromising patient care.

Julie Black, *Director, Product Development, MyMatrixx by Evernorth*

Danielle Quinn, *Pharmacy Program Director, Chesapeake Employers’ Insurance Company*

Gerry Stanley, *Global Chief Medical Officer, Express Scripts by Evernorth*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #1401

Work Smarter, Not Harder: Digitally Empowering the Future of Workers’ Compensation Claims

Legacy, manual processes continue to dominate the workers’ compensation industry. Medical record review, intake, and claim evaluation, for example, create mounting operational strain at the exact moment the industry faces unprecedented workforce and efficiency challenges. This session explores how digitally empowering claims operations—specifically through the responsible application of AI-driven intelligence—can help the industry reverse these trends. Rather than replacing human expertise, modern technology can augment it: enabling earlier intervention, smarter prioritization, and faster, more consistent claims resolution.

Moderator:

Max Chan, *VP, Business Development, Jopari Solutions, Inc*

Speakers:

Jeff Pirino, *Chief Growth Officer, Jopari Solutions, Inc*

Brian Cowan, *VP WC and Medical Analytics, Verisk*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #1402

Future of Spine Care in Workers’ Compensation: Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Non-Surgical Innovations

This session examines persistent challenges in Florida’s workers’ compensation system, particularly delayed chiropractic referrals, and how these barriers contribute to prolonged recovery, increased costs, and higher opioid exposure. Expert presenters will discuss evidence-based strategies using chiropractic care, non-surgical spinal decompression, and fascia-focused approaches to improve spine outcomes and reduce reinjury risk. Attendees will gain practical, interdisciplinary tools for accelerating return-to-work timelines, lowering expenses, and enhancing patient safety. This forward-looking session provides a clear roadmap for integrating innovative non-surgical spine care into workers’ compensation systems.

Moderator:

Jessie Bexley, *Chiropractor, University of South Florida. Neurosurgery, Brain & Spine*

Speakers:

Nathan Schilaty, *Lincoln Endowed Chair – Chiropractic & Biomechanics Research | Director, Center for Neuromusculoskeletal Research | Assoc Professor – Neurosurgery, Medical Engineering, University of South Florida*

Steven Weiniger, *Posture Expert, University of Western States & BodyZone.com*

Medical Issues and Case Management Breakout

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Crystal Ballroom C (Entrance to G2)

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #1500

15th Annual Florida Orthopedic Society Injured Workers Inspiration (IWI) Awards & Case Presentations

The Injured Workers Inspiration (IWI) Awards were created to recognize the remarkable achievements of injured workers and the musculoskeletal physicians. Showcasing this year's most compelling stories of medical innovation and resilience, these case presentations highlight both cutting-edge care and the power of the human spirit. Join us as the physicians, case managers, and adjusters who collaborated on these cases share key takeaways, lessons learned, and the factors that contributed to successful outcomes.

Moderators:

Dr. Vani Sabesan, *Associate Professor, OCPBC*

Teddy Gonzalez, *Nurse Case Managers, Field Case Managers*

Michael Bunte, *Sr. Claim Consultant & Business Partner Solutions Associate, AON*

Speakers:

Dr. Steve Page, *MD - Orthopedic Surgeon, 360 Orthopedics*

Dr. Christopher Donaldson, *MD, Orthopaedic Medical Group of Tampa Bay*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #1501

From MRI to Action: Using Early Clinical Diagnostics and Technology to Improve Front End Claim Decisions

This session explores how early clinical diagnostics—particularly advanced MRI interpretation and injury causation analysis—can transform front-end decision-making in workers' compensation claims. Panelists will discuss how leveraging timely, technology-enabled insights helps clarify causation, guide appropriate treatment pathways, and reduce downstream costs and disputes. Through real-world scenarios and an interactive exercise, attendees will learn how to operationalize early clinical signals to improve adjuster efficiency, accelerate care, and align stakeholders. The session emphasizes practical strategies to drive faster, more predictable claim outcomes while minimizing indemnity exposure and litigation risk.

Moderator:

Benedict Nwachukwu, *Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Best In Class MD*

Speakers:

Lara Heal, *Vice President, Network Services, CorVel Corporation*

Ryan Murphy, *Vice President, Product- Enterprise Claims, CorVel Corporation*

Harry Greditzer, *Director of Imaging, Best In Class MD (BICMD)*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #1502

Confounding Comorbidities: Practical Insights for Care Management

This session will delve into the practical considerations for managing injured workers with comorbidities, which are commonly seen not only in the general population but also as complicating factors in workers' compensation claims. The discussion will cover a range of comorbidities including cardiovascular / hypertension, mental health conditions, substance use (tobacco and alcohol), obesity, and diabetes. Attendees will gain insights into the complexities of medical and pharmacy management in these cases, including a focus on drug-drug and drug-disease interactions that must be considered to ensure effective and safe treatment plans.

Mark Williams, *Medical Director, The Hartford*

Silvia Sacalis, *V.P. Clinical Services, Healthsystems*

Temporary Staffing Breakout

1:00 pm – 4:20 pm

Magnolia Rooms 1-3

1:00 pm – 1:50 pm Course #1600

Optimizing Workers' Compensation Outcomes: TPA Unbundling and Strategic Collaboration with Brokers

Participants will gain a clear understanding of Third-Party Administrator (TPA) unbundling, including what it is, how it differs from traditional bundled models, and the advantages it offers in terms of cost control, transparency, and customization. The session will also explore how to leverage strategic relationships with key vendors—such as brokers, attorneys, and insurance carriers—to address ongoing staffing challenges while maintaining effective claims management and employee support. Finally, attendees will learn practical strategies to strengthen safety compliance and training programs, helping reduce injury frequency, improve workforce readiness, and drive better overall workers' compensation outcomes through proactive collaboration and informed decision-making.

Moderator:

Denise Evans, *Director of Claims, Staffmark*

Speakers:

Wendy Lanphere, *Vice President, CCMSI*

Sara Tomassi, *Director of Claims, Healthcare Services Group, Inc*

David Chmiel, *SVP, North America Director of Claims, HUB International*

1:50 pm – 2:40 pm Course #1601

The Buy-In Blueprint: Engaging Injured Workers' to Transform Recovery, Trust, and Outcomes

This course equips participants with practical tools and proven strategies to effectively engage injured workers and support improved recovery outcomes. The session emphasizes the critical role of psychological factors in the healing process, the importance of building trust through clear and compassionate communication, and the value of empowering workers with timely education and accessible resources. By addressing these key elements, participants will learn how to foster a supportive, worker-centered environment that accelerates recovery, reduces barriers to return-to-work, and promotes successful, sustainable reintegration into the workforce.

Moderator:

Gloria Fagan, *Director, Provider Marketing, Paradigm*

Speakers:

Chad Caldwell, *Regional Sales Executive, Paradigm Case Management*

Taurus Glass, *VP of Sales and Marketing, SMS National*

M. George Waters, *Attorney, Eraclides Gelman*

Jennifer Jordan, *Director of Claims, WC, INVO Claims Administrators*

Nancy Snyder, *Manager, Clinical Services, Innovative Claims Strategies LLC*

2:40 pm – 3:30 pm Course #1602

Safety and Analytics: Proactive Strategies for Compliance and Return-to-Work

This course is designed to equip participants with the knowledge and tools to use safety measures and data analytics to improve workers' compensation outcomes. It focuses on proactive approaches to compliance, injury prevention, and return-to-work programs. Participants will learn how to integrate analytics into decision-making processes to enhance workplace safety, reduce claims, and support injured workers in returning to work efficiently.

Moderator:

Sebastian Grasso, *President / CEO, Windham*

Speakers:

Debra Livingston, *CEO/Founder, ReEmployAbility, Inc.*

Julie Zobec, *Attorney, Hamilton Miller*

Ray Therrien, *CEO, Delta Group*

Ebony Clemons, *Senior Risk Manager, Garyjames & Affiliates Inc.*

James Colquitt, *Attorney, Eraclides Gelman*

3:30 pm – 4:20 pm Course #1603

Elevated Execution: Where Workforce Strategy Meets Claim Outcomes

This session brings together key themes from the three previous sessions to demonstrate how challenges can be transformed into opportunities through intentional preparation, organizational alignment, and effective execution. Participants will explore real-world case studies that highlight common staffing and compliance obstacles and examine practical solutions that have led to successful outcomes. The session will conclude with actionable strategies attendees can apply within their own organizations to address workforce and regulatory challenges with confidence and resilience.

Moderator:

Sharee Tumbling, *Attorney, Moore, Ingram, Johnson & Steele*

Speakers:

Jaclyn Chapman, *Vice President, Claims Consultant, Brown & Brown*

Carol Blaine, *Managing Director, Brown & Brown*

Suzy Braden, *Director, Captive Client Services, Gallagher Bassett*

Scott Johnson, *Risk and Safety Manager, Paychex*

Kevin Kilcoyne, *Director of Staffing Insurance, Barrow Group*

Florida Case Law Update

2:10 pm – 4:15 pm Course #1700

Palms Ballroom – Canary

The panelists will discuss many of the major workers' compensation cases that have been decided in the last year by the appellate courts. An analysis of the trends of the court and the law is also given, with emphasis on the practical application of the case law to the handling of a workers' compensation claim. Summaries of the cases will be available for attendees under this session in the conference app.

Moderator:

Lou Stern, *Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver & Stern, P.A.*

Speakers:

David Beach, *Attorney, Rissman, Barrett, Hurt, Donahue, McLain & Mangan, P.A.*

Geoff Bichler, *Attorney, Bichler & Longo*

Marc Golden, *Attorney, Rosenthal, Levy, Simon & Sosa*

Amie DeGuzman, *Attorney, The Law Office of John J. Rahaim*

Annual National Regulators Roundtable

**Presented by the Southern Association of
Workers' Compensation Administrators (SAWCA)**



2:30 pm – 4:30 pm Course #1800

Crystal Ballroom G1

The National Regulators Roundtable brings together regulators from throughout the country representing more than half the nation to discuss challenges, concerns and issues facing individual jurisdictions in the oversight of the ever-changing workers' compensation industry. It is a forum where regulators share lessons learned and seek timely answers to their most pressing issues. This national forum of state leaders will be open to all WCI attendees representing a unique opportunity for participants and audience alike.

Moderator:

Frank McKay, *Appellate Judge and Director, Georgia State Board of Workers' Compensation*

Tuesday, August 25

Official
Wi-Fi
Sponsor



Wi-Fi: Marriott Convention Level
Wi-Fi Password: BAUERFEIND

7:00 am – 12:00 am

Shuttle bus service between the overflow hotel and the Marriott World Center is available. Refer to parking map & shuttle schedule. All parking onsite.

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Conference Registration and Information

Convention Level

8:00 am – 8:45 am

FSU School of Law Alumni Breakfast

Hall of Cities: Boston

8:45 am – 9:45 am

Course #2300

Live Surgical Showcase: Inside the Operating Room

Presented by Orlando Orthopaedic Center

Palms Ballroom – Canary



This live broadcast offers workers' compensation professionals exclusive, real-time access inside the operating room, delivering a front-row view of surgical excellence in action. Through step-by-step commentary and an interactive Q&A with the surgical team, attendees—including adjusters and case managers—will gain critical clinical context to better understand treatment decisions, procedural considerations, and patient outcomes. This dynamic learning experience bridges the gap between clinical care and claims management, empowering participants with insights they can immediately apply in their roles.

Moderator:

Steven Weber, *Surgeon, Orlando Orthopaedic Center*

Speaker:

Sebastian Rivera, *Surgeon, Orlando Orthopaedic Center*

9:00 am – 2:00 pm

"Comp Time" Diner

Purchase food and beverages in the Exhibit Hall. Visit the "Comp Time" Diner... grab & go, or sit and network with clients and exhibitors!

9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Headshot Lounge

Outside the entrance to the Exhibit Hall - Cypress Ballroom

Sponsored by:



SUNRISE
MEDICAL SOLUTIONS

Upgrade your professional image at the Conference Headshot Lounge. Stop by to receive a high-quality, professionally taken headshot—perfect for LinkedIn profiles, company bios, speaking engagements, and marketing materials. This convenient on-site experience makes it easy to refresh your photo without missing conference activities. Whether you're networking, speaking, or advancing your career, a polished headshot helps you make a strong first impression. Don't miss this opportunity to put your best face forward.

9:00 am – 3:30 pm

Exhibit Hall Is OPEN

Exhibit Hall - Cypress Ballroom

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Puppy and Kitten Cuddle Zone

Exhibit Hall - Cypress Ballroom

Puppies and kittens and stress relief! Recharge, relax, and play with furry friends in need of love and a home.

Cuddle Zone Sponsored by:

ConservCare, Inc.
National Provider of Home Care Services



WCDI Workers' Compensation
Defense Institute

11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Inns of Court Judicial Luncheon (By Invitation Only)

Grand Ballrooms 10-12

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Course #2303

Live Oral Argument

Presided Over by the Florida First District Court of Appeal

Palms Ballroom – Canary

Actual cases will be argued live before a panel of Judges of the First District Court of Appeal. The Court's decision will be posted on its website several weeks after the oral arguments take place.

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Ice Cream Social

Exhibit Hall - Cypress Ballroom

Sponsored by:



ADVOCATE INVESTIGATIVE

Agency, Inc.

877-356-3555 | CA PI 26792

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Exhibitor Move-Out

Exhibit Hall - Cypress Ballroom

8:00 pm – 10:30 pm

Tuesday Night Soiree: Party with Purpose - Kids Chance WORKS

Palms Ballroom – Sago & Sabal

The Tuesday Night Soirée: Party for a Purpose is becoming a must-attend signature event at WCI. More than just a party, it's a chance to connect with fellow attendees, forge new relationships, and enjoy a night unlike anything else. This year, join us as we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Workers' Compensation Educational Conference with The Molly Ringwalds, the ultimate 80s tribute band. Back by popular demand, they will rock the stage with the decade's biggest hits. Known for their high-energy performances and larger-than-life stage presence, they'll keep the celebration going. Embrace the era in your favorite 80s outfit or wear a T-shirt featuring your favorite 80s artist 50% of all ticket proceeds will be donated to Kids' Chance of America WORKS Initiative. WORKS will serve students and scholarship recipients by providing tools, guidance, and connections to pursue a wide range of post-secondary pathways—college, apprenticeships, skills training, military service, or direct entry into the workforce. Special emphasis will be placed on careers in, across, and adjacent to the workers' compensation industry, leveraging students' lived experiences and interest in shaping its future. To purchase ticket, visit www.wci360.com/soiree/.

2026 Roger L. Williams National Regulators College

**Presented by the Southern Association of Workers' Compensation
Administrators and the Self-Insurance Guaranty Funds of America**



Separate Registration & Payment Is Required.

Register at: www.sawca.org/events/the-college/.

Open Only To State Regulators, Officials and Legislators.

7:45 am – 4:30 pm

Hall of Cities: New York, New Orleans

7:45 am – 8:45 am

Breakfast and Registration

Hall of Cities: New York, New Orleans

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2300

Live Surgical Showcase: Inside the Operating Room

Presented by Orlando Orthopaedic Center

Palms Ballroom – Canary

This live broadcast offers workers' compensation professionals exclusive, real-time access inside the operating room, delivering a front-row view of surgical excellence in action. Through step-by-step commentary and an interactive Q&A with the surgical team, attendees—including adjusters and case managers—will gain critical clinical context to better understand treatment decisions, procedural considerations, and patient outcomes. This dynamic learning experience bridges the gap between clinical care and claims management, empowering participants with insights they can immediately apply in their roles.

Moderator:

Steven Weber, *Surgeon, Orlando Orthopaedic Center*

Speaker:

Sebastian Rivera, *Surgeon, Orlando Orthopaedic Center*

10:30 am – 11:00 am

Employer Bankruptcy and Regulatory Response

Self-Insured Employer / Voluntary Market Insured Employer... From a national bankruptcy to a single-state default...a discussion explaining the regulatory preparation & responsibility for each type of employer.

Gary Davis, *Executive Director, Southern Association of Workers' Compensation Administrators*

Tom Glasson, *Senior Government Affairs Officer, AIG*

11:05 am – 12:00 pm

Fee Schedules for Regulators - Strategies for Change

Greg Gilbert, *EVP, Chief Reimbursement and Government Relations Officer, for Concentra* will host a panel discussion by industry and regulatory pro-

fessionals who have experienced the "fee schedule wars", know the history and can speak to the future.

Moderator:

Greg Gilbert, *EVP and Chief Reimbursement and Gov't Relations, Concentra*

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Lunch - Provided to Regulators College Students and Presenters

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Issues to Watch in 2026

Mark Walls and Kimberly George discuss the workers' compensation and related issues which they are monitoring in 2026. They will provide insights into these critical challenges and why regulators need to be focusing on these issues.

Kimberly George, *Global Head, Innovation & Product Development, Sedgwick*

Mark Walls, *VP for Communications & Strategic Analysis, Safety National*

2:00 pm – 2:45 pm

Security for the Self-Insured

Identifying the correct amount of security that should be required for individual employers to be approved to self-insure is a critical function of the state regulatory agency. Safety National will share their approach to calculating sufficient security to cover all claims in a bankruptcy.

Joseph Braun, *Senior Vice President, Credit Risk, Safety National*

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm

An Ethical Approach to Political Challenges and Realities of Agency Leadership

Ben Vinson, *Chairman, Georgia State Board of Workers' Compensation*

Gaetano Testini, *Director, Industrial Commission of Arizona*

Asha Joseph Jefferson, *Chair, Maryland Workers' Compensation Commission*

Scott Wilhoit, *Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Workers' Claims*

Charles Collins, *Workers' Compensation Director, State of Alaska*

4:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Closing Discussion

Moderators:

Frank McKay, *Appellate Judge and Director, Georgia State Board of Workers' Compensation*

Mark Formby, *Chairman, Mississippi Workers' Compensation Commission*

Return-to-Work Breakout

8:15 am – 12:00 pm

Crystal Ballroom H

8:15 am – 8:45 am

Breakfast

Mingle and network with those attending the Return-to-Work Breakout while enjoying a continental breakfast sponsored by:

ReEmployAbility
EIG Risk
HR Law
Claims Investigation Agency
The IMA Group

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #1900

The Return-to-Work Reset: Mindset, Communication, and the Future of Recovery

This session explores how mindset, communication, and modern recovery strategies are reshaping return-to-work outcomes across the Workers' Compensation industry. With perspectives spanning catastrophic injury recovery, functional rehabilitation, and human-centered claims leadership, the panel examines the barriers that keep injured workers from successfully returning and the innovations that move them forward. The conversation challenges traditional approaches while offering practical solutions for employers, clinicians, and claims professionals navigating today's changing workforce.

Moderator:

Greg Hamlin, *Chief Claims Officer, Berkley Industrial Comp*

Speakers:

Josh Schuette, *Executive Director of National Work Comp Sales & Acct. Mgt., Brooks Rehabilitation*

Claire Muselman, *COO / Professor, WorkersCompensation.com / Drake University*

Becky Curtis, *Director of Strategic Partnerships, Override/Take Courage Coaching*

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #1901

Engaging the Injured Worker for Better Return-to-Work Outcomes

Effective communication is essential to successful workers' compensation programs, shaping recovery, claim outcomes, and the overall employee experience. In this session, a diverse panel of experts will discuss how emerging trends are reshaping communication strategies across the industry. Featuring insights from a Risk Manager, a technology innovator, a Nurse Director, and the Kind Souls Foundation, the panel will highlight practical tools and collaborative approaches. Together, they'll share strategies to improve engagement, reduce friction, and achieve better outcomes for injured workers and employers.

Moderator:

Debra Livingston, *CEO/Founder, ReEmployAbility, Inc.*

Speakers:

Karen Thomas, *Vice President, Clinical Solutions, CorVel Corporation*

Emily Cameron, *Head of Product and Customer Success, Crosstie*

Zacariah Bamfield, *Director of Claims, Sysco Corporation*

Andrew Bloom, *Program Director, Kind Souls Foundation*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #1902

From Reactive to Proactive: Reengineering the RTW Process

This session explains how the P4 People Risk Management framework (Pre-Hire, Post-Offer, Prevention, Post-Claim, and Leadership) influences return-to-work outcomes. Panelists will identify practical strategies employers can implement at each stage of the employee lifecycle to reduce claim severity and improve transitional duty success. They will evaluate the role leadership behavior and workplace culture play in employee trust, engagement, and compliance with return-to-work programs.

Moderator:

Zachary Rosenthal, *Senior Risk Advisor, EIG Risk*

Speakers:

Justin Romine, *Vice President, Marriott Claims Services*

Beverly Finkelstein, *Workers' Compensation Manager, Charter Schools USA*

Andy Borah, *Attorney, HR Law, P.A.*

Eddie Martinez, *Vice President of Safety and Claims Management, Eastern Insurance Group*

Top-of-Mind from the C-Suite

8:45 am – 12:00 pm

Crystal Ballroom J1

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2000

The Emerging Risks Regarding Mental Health in the Workplace: Strategies for Prevention and Wellbeing

As mental health becomes a more prominent focus in the workplace, employers are facing an elevated risk of severe mental health-related claims. While work-related mental health claims are not uniformly available across all job types or states, the shift from focusing solely on physical injuries to a holistic approach that includes mental health and behavioral issues is reshaping the landscape of workplace risk management. This session will explore the development of mental health claims, the challenges they pose, and the opportunities they present for employers. Attendees will gain insights into risk mitigation strategies designed to help employees achieve emotional and mental wellbeing, not just physical health. The session will also showcase innovative tools such as learning modules and secure, remote counseling platforms that empower workers to improve their overall wellbeing. Participants will leave with actionable strategies to enhance productivity, morale, and risk mitigation, preparing them for the anticipated rise in mental health claims entering the workers' compensation system.

Moderator:

Leah Sharp, *SVP Clinical Services, Gallagher Bassett*

Speakers:

Todd Harcharik, *Claims Manager, ALDI USA*

April Brackley, *Sr. Risk Advisor, Darden*

Linda Summerlin, *AVP Case Management Services, Gallagher Bassett*

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2001

Breaking Barriers: Ensuring Access to Health Care in Workers' Compensation

Access to health care remains a critical challenge in workers' compensation, particularly in rural and underserved areas where hospital closures and system consolidations have significantly limited care availability. This session will delve into the impact of these challenges on injured workers and explore strategies to ensure equitable access to care. Attendees will gain insights into navigating the complexities of health systems opting out of PPO networks and learn how organizations can adapt to these changes to maintain effective care delivery. The session will equip participants with actionable strategies to overcome access-to-care barriers, ensuring injured workers receive timely and effective treatment, regardless of their location or circumstances.

Moderator:

Jennifer Cogbill, *Senior Vice President - Solutions & GBCARE, Gallagher Bassett*

Speakers:

Brian Walters, *Vice President of Risk Management, Sodexo*

Aimee Ross, *Workers' Comp Manager, Rentokil-Terminix*

Kathy Doyle, *Claims Operations Leader - Workers' Compensation, Gallagher Bassett*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2002

Building Tomorrow's Workforce: Attracting and Retaining the Next Generation in Workers' Compensation

The workers' compensation industry is at a critical inflection point as an aging workforce and increasing retirements create significant talent shortages. This session will explore how these demographic shifts are impacting organizations today and what leaders are doing in practice to address them. Through real world examples from risk management and industry leaders, attendees will learn how mentorship, training, and early career development programs are being used not only to attract younger talent, but to retain and prepare them for long term careers in workers' compensation. Participants will leave with actionable strategies they can apply to strengthen their talent pipelines, support early career professionals, and ensure the future sustainability of the industry.

Moderator:

Nikki Jackson, *NA Head of Learning Strategy and Emerging Talent, Gallagher Bassett*

Speakers:

Greg Wiley, *Director of Risk Management, Asbury Automotive Group*

Javier Garza, *Director, Risk Management, CEMEX*

Desi Fioravanti, *Emerging Talent INVEST Program - Guardian Associate, Gallagher Bassett*

Professional Employer Organization (PEO) Breakout

Sponsored by the National Association of PEOs
and the Florida Association of PEOs

8:45 am – 2:45 pm

Grand Ballroom 7B

(Entrance through corridor between Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2100

Hot Topics for Carriers

Be sure to attend this session, which will feature an action-packed and highly topical presentation from representatives of insurance carriers servicing the PEO workers' compensation market. The topics that will be discussed will include the impact of AI on claims management, M & A, managing medical costs, carrier rates and the impact of minimum premium policies.

Moderator:

Torben Madson, *Deputy General Counsel of FAPEO, The PEO Law Firm, LLC*

Speakers:

Sheldon Altschuler, *VP, Key Risk, a Berkley Company*

Cindy Howard, *SVP, Claims, Normandy Ins. Co.*

David Brodsky, *Chief Underwriting Officer, SUNZ Insurance Company*

Robert Morris, *Senior Underwriting Manager, Zurich North America*

Morgan Lynch, *Director of Legal Operations, SouthEast Personnel Leasing, Inc.*

Trula Mitchell, *Vice President of Claims, Prescient National*

10:00 am – 11:00 am Course #2101

Practical AI for Workers' Comp Risk Management: From Pilot to Performance

This fast-paced panel brings together underwriting leaders, safety and risk executives, and PEO strategists to explore how AI is reshaping risk operations end to end. From front end underwriting and loss control to workers' compensation innovation and executive decision-making, panelists will share real-world wins, pitfalls, and governance models that keep AI practical, safe, and ROI-focused. Attendees will learn how to partner with carriers, equip teams, and guide clients to adopt AI responsibly balancing speed with subject matter expertise and regulatory expectations.

Moderator:

Scott Johnson, *Risk and Safety Manager, Paychex*

Speakers:

Hank Johnson, *Director of Risk Management & Compliance, Nextep, Inc.*

Dan Leporati, *Director of Risk Management, Engage PEO*

Amit Sharma, *Senior Underwriter of Risk in Workers' Compensation, JustWorks*

Ted Crawford, *CEO, Resourcing Edge*

11:15 am – 11:45 am Course #2102

NAPEO Legislative Update

NAPEO will update attendees on all of the legal and legislative challenges that are impacting PEOs in the different states around the country. This will be a comprehensive update of all the states and how to take action.

Farrah Fielder, *Chief Operating Officer, NAPEO*

Olivia Plemmons, *Director of State Government Affairs, NAPEO*

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm Course #2103

Claims Management in the PEO Model, Challenges and Strategies for Solutions

This panel of representatives from the PEO industry and their carrier partners will provide useful insight to assist you in strengthening and building your claims management program. This session will address strategies you can implement to create an optimal PEO/carrier claims team that can handle the wackiest of claims. This interactive discussion will provide your team with real-world applications that you can employ to find that elusive sweet spot where carriers get the optimum benefit of the PEO's claim knowledge. Some of the important topics that will be discussed in this session include challenges with claims handling in multiple jurisdictions and differences in compensable conditions in those jurisdictions, claim reserving strategies, managing large loss claims, and return-to-work programs. Make sure to show up early since the seating for this presentation is always at a premium.

Moderator:

Torben Madson, *Deputy General Counsel of FAPEO, The PEO Law Firm, LLC*

Speakers:

Houston McArthur, *Workers' Compensation Manager, One Digital / Resourcing Edge*

Ebony Murray Ortega, *Sr Claims Manager, E3 HR Inc*

Ann Kensity, *Director, Workers' Compensation Claims, Justworks*

Lisa Shoaff, *Workers' Compensation Supervisor, CCMSI*

Professional Employer Organization (PEO) Breakout (Continued)

Grand Ballroom 7B

1:45 pm – 2:45 pm Course #2104

The Role of Risk Management in Mergers and Acquisitions

The world of investment banking has been intrigued by the PEO industry for over a decade and rather than slowing down, the pace of consolidation has only increased. The secret about our success has been revealed and consolidation within the industry is hotter than ever! But putting together a deal for Merger or Acquisition is more than just a numbers game. In order to do it well and profitably for everyone, the Risk Management Team has to be an integral part of the transaction from beginning through the integration and beyond. This session will explore how the Risk Management Department should be engaged to ensure a smooth Mergers and Acquisitions process, from evaluating the overall risk to ensuring a coherent workers' compensation and risk management strategy once the integration is completed. If your company is contemplating M&A, as either buyer or seller, this session is a must-attend!

Moderator:

Abram Finkelstein, *Manager, WingLeader, LLC*

Speakers:

Sharlie Reynolds, *EVP, Libertate Insurance Services*

Robyn Rusignuolo, *Chief Operating Officer, PrestigePEO*

Attorney Breakout

8:45 am – 3:30 pm

Crystal Ballroom M (Entrance Crystal J2)

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2200

What Do the Judges Want??? Filings? Evidence? Motions?

The Richard Sicking American Inn of Court will present what the judges want and what appropriate documents need to be filed and what filings are not appropriate. The panel will discuss in detail what documents and filings are necessary for documenting attorneys fee and what the different judges around the state are requiring. It will address both the F.S. 440 statutory requirements as well as the requirements under the Workers' Compensation and Civil Rules of Procedure. They will discuss appropriate court filings for various motions, hearings and will discuss such topics as what is needed when having an Expedited Hearing under F.S. 440.25(4)(g) (h) versus a full merit Final Hearing. The panel will discuss the differences around the state and what various judges are requiring, and what filings are not appropriate and are not considered by the judges and should not be filed with the court. (i.e.: Notice of Unavailability, Cover Sheets, Proposed Orders, etc.)

Margret Kerr, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

Ivan Morales, *Attorney, Morales & Cerino, P.A.*

Diana Castrillon, *Attorney, Your Advocates*

Iliana Forte, *Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

10:00 am – 11:30 am Course #2201

Hot Topics for Attorneys

This breakout brings together four of the most prestigious litigators and appellate attorneys in the Florida Workers' Compensation system. They are tasked with addressing the most important and controversial cases and decisions issued by the corps of JCCs and 1DCA (including relevant holdings of the other DCAs and Florida Supreme Court) since last year's WCI. It is always relevant, informative and entertaining for all stakeholders in the worker's compensation world. And, the Point-Counter Point is fun, likely and never dull.

Moderator:

Stuart Suskin, *Mediator, Stuart F. Suskin Mediations*

Speakers:

William Rogner, *Attorney, HR Law, P.A.*

Michael Winer, *Attorney, Winer Law Group*

Glen Wieland, *Attorney, Wieland & DeLattre, P.A.*

Tracey Hyde, *Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver & Stern, P.A.*

2:30 pm – 3:30 pm Course #2202

Cyber Security and Privacy Law

Presented by the Tampa Bay American Inn of Court - This presentation will explore key cybersecurity risks facing lawyers and their clients, with a focus on applicable privacy laws. The speakers will examine the protection of sensitive client and third-party data from cyberattacks, including data theft and exposure on public leak sites. Attendees will gain practical strategies for safeguarding confidentiality and data integrity, with discussion of common threats such as malware, ransomware, and phishing schemes. The program will also address the ethical obligations imposed by The Florida Bar regarding the protection of sensitive information, the potential consequences of failing to take reasonable security measures, and important considerations related to cyber insurance.

Moderators:

Cathy Agacinski, *Attorney, Silver & Agacinski*

Mitch Golden, *Attorney, Banker Lopez Gassler P.A.*

Speakers:

Franklin Zemel, *Attorney, Fox Rothschild*

Robert Wilkins, *Attorney, Jones Foster*

Adjuster Breakout

8:45 am – 4:15 pm

Magnolia Ballrooms 4-6

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2300

Live Surgical Showcase: Inside the Operating Room

Presented by Orlando Orthopaedic Center

Palms Ballroom – Canary



This live broadcast offers workers' compensation professionals exclusive, real-time access inside the operating room, delivering a front-row view of surgical excellence in action. Through step-by-step commentary and an interactive Q&A with the surgical team, attendees—including adjusters and case managers—will gain critical clinical context to better understand treatment decisions, procedural considerations, and patient outcomes. This dynamic learning experience bridges the gap between clinical care and claims management, empowering participants with insights they can immediately apply in their roles.

Moderator:

Steven Weber, *Surgeon, Orlando Orthopaedic Center*

Speaker:

Sebastian Rivera, *Surgeon, Orlando Orthopaedic Center*

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2301

This is Not Health Insurance

This panel discusses the importance of thorough initial investigation, obtaining medical history, examination of all medical evidence and highlighting the procedures to limit medical exposure in a claim. From when to issue the 120-day letter, when and why to file DWC-12s, and questioning MCC, this panel takes a deep dive into why Florida Workers' Compensation Coverage is NOT Health Insurance.

Moderator:

Caitlin Beyl, *Attorney, McConaughay, Coonrod, Weaver & Stern, P.A.*

Speakers:

Victor Ontaneda, *Claims Operation Director, AmTrust Financial*

Matt Norris, *Claims Supervisor, Florida League of Cities*

Kathryn Butkus, *Director of Workers' Compensation Claims, FrankCrum*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2302

From the Sofa Place to the Work Place

The impact of a workplace injury on an injured worker can be significant. Aside from the physical ailments suffered, removal from the employment setting can lead to isolation and feelings of hopelessness. Studies further show that the longer an injured worker is out of work, the less likely they are to successfully return to the work force. Returning to work following an injury is a crucial milestone in any workers' compensation claim. This panel will examine the importance of a thoughtful return-to-work program along with strategic measures to ensure proper implementation. A special emphasis will be placed on problem solving solutions helpful to overcome obstacles imposed to a return to work. These measures are designed to shorten the life span of a claim and when successfully implemented they can have a dramatic impact on cost containment.

Moderator:

Betty Justin, *Attorney, Rissman, Barrett, Hurt, Donahue, McLain & Mangan, P.A.*

Speakers:

Nathalie Duran, *Casualty Claims Consultant, Aon*

Gabe Hayes, *Branch Manager, Gallagher Bassett*

Amy Wilds, *Sales Executive, CBCS, Inc.*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #2303

Live Oral Argument

Presided Over by the Florida First District Court of Appeal

Palms Ballroom – Canary

Actual cases will be argued live before a panel of Judges of the First District Court of Appeal. The Court's decision will be posted on its website several weeks after the oral arguments take place.

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #2304

The Connected Claims Ecosystem

The Connected Claims Ecosystem explores how today's claims decisions ripple across carriers, employers, consultants, nurses, and litigation teams. As overlapping leaves, financial strategies, and risk financing models collide, adjusters sit at the center of an increasingly complex web. This session examines how ecosystem-wide visibility and collaboration elevate outcomes, reduce friction, and position adjusters as critical drivers of cost control and claim resolution.

Moderator:

Christine Jermin, *Vice President, Casualty Claims, Brown & Brown*

Speakers:

Joshua Ingram, *AVP Client Services, Sedgwick*

Taylor Hill, *Senior Manager - Claims Management, Walmart Inc*

Christa Manwaring, *Senior Claims Manager, Excess Workers' Compensation, Safety National*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #2305

Not Just Mediation: Identifying and Creating Windows of Opportunity

In today's ever-evolving and stressful claims environment, achieving the goal of elevation to exceptional claims handling involves mastering the ability to recognize and seize the opportunity for meaningful case resolution – no matter how complex the claim. This presentation will emphasize development of your own best practice approach to evaluating cases with a resolution-driven mindset, by exploring how to assess exposure, navigate unique challenges, and understand the dynamics between all parties involved...

while keeping concurrent focus on the opportunity for settlement. Join our panel of industry experts who have developed a roadmap within their distinct and specialized focus(es), as they share strategies they have developed from case onset through litigation. It is this Panel's dedicated objective that the presentation will provide valuable practical insights into identifying those critical moments when a claim presents a powerful opportunity to address settlement potential from a position of strength and purpose.

Moderator:

Scott Silver, *Attorney, Silver, Bass & Brams, P.A.*

Speakers:

Michael Grimaldi, *Unit Manager, Travelers Insurance Company*

Crystal Chancey, *Workers' Compensation Claims Manager, Publix Super Markets*

Tiffany Elkins, *Senior Manager, Lodestar Claims and Risk Services*

18th Annual National Workers' Compensation Review

8:45 am – 4:15 pm

Grand Ballroom 8B (Entrance through corridor Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2400

State Of the States: National Case Law Highlights 2024-2025

In partnership with the Workers' Compensation Defense Institute, this session offers a comprehensive multistate analysis of landmark workers' compensation cases. Panelists will examine how recent rulings are reshaping the industry and discuss their implications for stakeholders.

Moderator:

Steve Tipton, *Attorney, Flahive, Ogden & Latson*

Speakers:

Sarah Reisner, *Attorney, Manier & Herod*

Kristina Jones, *Attorney, Jones Jones LLC*

Rusty Watts, *Attorney, Swift, Currie, McGhee & Hiers*

Marguerite Jonak, *Attorney, Manning Kass*

Zack Jarrett, *Attorney, Holder, Padgett, Littlejohn, and Prickett, LLC*

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2401

Actuarial Insight: Mystery of Underwriting and Reserving – What You Don't Know Can Help You or Cost You Big

Learn how the day-to-day actions of lawyers, doctors, adjusters, employers, and other stakeholders in the workers' compensation system directly influence critical financial outcomes. Often dismissed as a "backroom" issue, actuarial and financial processes shape how claims are managed, reserved, and ultimately paid—and why they matter to your role. This session demystifies what actuaries do, how accurate and timely information drives better results, and how actuarial input affects collateral, underwriting, and cost control. Attendees will gain practical guidance on maximizing the positive impact of actuaries while avoiding unintended consequences that can undermine claims management and reserving.

Moderator:

Suzy Braden, *Director, Captive Client Services, Gallagher Bassett*

Speakers:

James Marshall, *President, Edgewater Actuarial Insight*

Pete Rasmussen, *SVP - Claim Service Partners, Captive Resources, LLC*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2402

Empathy Isn't Soft—It's Strategic! How Empathy Curbs Litigation and Total Claim Cost

Empathy is the ability to understand and acknowledge an injured worker's experience without becoming emotionally entangled, and it differs from sympathy by focusing on understanding rather than pity. When claims professionals communicate with empathy—through active listening, respectful language, and clear explanations—injured workers feel heard, which can shorten claim duration, improve return-to-work outcomes, and build trust. This session teaches practical tools for empathetic, professional communication and highlights the importance of recognizing psychosocial factors that influence a claim. Ultimately, empathy is not about being overly emotional; it is a professional skill that makes the workers' compensation system more fair, effective, and humane.

Moderator:

Geralyn Datz, *President and Clinical Director, Southern Behavioral Medicine*

Speakers:

Becky Curtis, *Director of Strategic Partnerships, Override/Take Courage Coaching*

Debra Livingston, *CEO/Founder, ReEmployAbility, Inc.*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #2403

In Partnership with the College of Workers' Compensation Lawyers - Rapid Fire Discussion of Important/Hot/ Topics

The College of Workers' Compensation Lawyers is continuing its partnership with the National Workers' Compensation Review to discuss issues affecting workers' compensation from a national perspective. The panel this year comprises plaintiff attorneys, defense attorneys, and a WC Commissioner. Issues to be discussed may include topics such as Rising Medical Costs and Severity of Claims, Expansion of Mental Health Claims, the Workforce transformation (Gig Economy, Aging Workers, and Remote Work), Regulatory and Compliance Complexity due to the State-by-State Fragmentation, and Technology & Data Transformation, such as AI, Telemedicine, and Analytics.

Moderator:

Bobby Stokes, *Attorney, Flahive, Ogden & Latson*

Speakers:

Annemarie Pantazis, *Attorney, Wilder Pantazis Law Group*

Jeff Napolitano, *Attorney, Juge Napolitano*

Mike Doyle, *Attorney, Michael J. Doyle, Attorney at Law*

Cathy Surbeck, *Commissioner, Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Appeal Board*

Stuart Colburn, *Attorney, Downs & Stanford, P.C.*

National Workers' Compensation Review (Continued)

Grand Ballroom 8B (Entrance through corridor Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #2404

Workers' Compensation Exclusivity: Sword or Shield?

This session examines the workers' compensation exclusivity doctrine and when it functions as a powerful shield—or an unexpected sword—for employers. Attendees will explore coverage boundaries, unintended consequences, and how missteps in evaluating or denying difficult claims can expose employers to significant tort liability. The discussion will address practical decision-making processes, potential E&O exposures, and the risks that arise when exclusivity defenses fail. Participants will leave with a clearer understanding of how to protect employers while minimizing litigation and financial exposure.

David Langham, *Deputy Chief Judge, Florida Office of the Judges of Compensation Claims*

David Harvey, *Attorney, Kelley Kronenberg*

Deedee Gasch, *Attorney, Cranfill Sumner LLP*

Desiree Render, *AVP National Technical Compliance, Sedgwick*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #2405

Trail Blazers: Power Pivot – Dealing with Change

This interactive workshop focuses on bold, action driven leadership and the adaptability required to navigate pivotal business transitions. Through guided small group activities, participants will examine leadership strategies for managing mergers and acquisitions, responding to industry shifts, leading through crisis moments, and successfully stepping into new roles and opportunities. The session is designed to be practical and engaging, offering participants concrete tools, perspectives, and decision-making frameworks they can apply immediately in their organizations and careers.

Moderator:

Jennifer Morris Jones, *Attorney, Cranfill Sumner LLP*

Speakers:

Caryn Siebert, *Director - Carrier Engagement; Vice President - Carrier Practice, Gallagher Bassett*

Jennifer Novosel, *VP Claims - Casualty & Workers' Compensation, Westfield Group*

Amy Klatt, *Senior Vice President of Captives and Programs Claims, Skyward Specialty Insurance*

Nicole Patterson, *Director of Workers' Compensation and Risk Management Operations, Aramark*

Medical Issues and Case Management Breakout

8:45 am – 4:15 pm

Crystal Ballroom C (Entrance to G2)

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2300

Live Surgical Showcase: Inside the Operating Room

Presented by Orlando Orthopaedic Center

Palms Ballroom – Canary

This live broadcast offers workers' compensation professionals exclusive, real-time access inside the operating room, delivering a front-row view of surgical excellence in action. Through step-by-step commentary and an interactive Q&A with the surgical team, attendees—including adjusters and case managers—will gain critical clinical context to better understand treatment decisions, procedural considerations, and patient outcomes. This dynamic learning experience bridges the gap between clinical care and claims management, empowering participants with insights they can immediately apply in their roles.

Moderator:

Steven Weber, *Surgeon, Orlando Orthopaedic Center*

Speaker:

Sebastian Rivera, *Surgeon, Orlando Orthopaedic Center*

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2500

Defusing the Disengagement Time Bomb

In workers' compensation, one of the most costly and overlooked drivers of prolonged MSK claims is the disengaged injured worker. This session will explore how disengagement often begins early, quietly escalating claim duration, medical costs, and complexity long before it is reflected in traditional documentation. Through perspectives from employer, insurer, and clinical leaders, attendees will learn how to recognize early warning signs of disengagement and implement practical interventions to re-engage workers before the claim derails. The panel will share real-world strategies and case examples that demonstrate how coordinated support can improve functional outcomes and reduce preventable claim escalation.

Moderator:

Raja Sundaram, *CEO, Plethy*

Speakers:

Joseph Sousa, *Deputy Director, City of San Diego*

Justin Romine, *Vice President, Marriott Claims Services*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2501

From Injury to Recovery: Understanding Traumatic Brain Injury Trajectories in Workers' Compensation

Neurological injuries occur every nine seconds and represent a significant clinical and financial burden across the workers' compensation system. This educational session is designed for case managers and claims adjusters to enhance understanding of traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and concussions resulting from workplace incidents. Attendees will gain practical insight into brain anatomy, mechanisms of injury, and the clinical trajectories of both traumatic and non-traumatic brain injuries. The presentation will review common signs and symptoms of TBI, best practices for evidence-based treatment, and acceptable therapeutic interventions, including rehabilitation, pharmaceutical management, and surgical considerations. Emphasis will be placed on return-to-work guidelines, expectation management, complication risk, and discharge planning to support safe, sustainable recovery while balancing cost containment.

Moderator:

Stacy Whalen, *Medical Management Director, Safety National*

Speakers:

Cynthia Chaney, *VP Workers' Compensation Program, PAM Health*

Vinay Chopra, *Owner/Physician, Genesis Comp Concussion*

Matthew Griffin, *Owner/Physician, Genesis Comp Concussion*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #2502

Access to Care Is the New Crisis in Workers' Compensation: Provider Shortages, Retirements, and What Comes Next

Access to care is a growing cost problem in workers' compensation — and it's not getting better on its own. Physicians are opting out, medical inflation is accelerating, and the tools most programs rely on are losing their effectiveness. This session delivers an honest look at what's broken and what's working, from early nurse engagement to relationship-based provider development to the treatment pathway discipline that high-performing programs are using right now.

Moderator:

Jill Rosenthal, *Chief Medical Officer, Zenith Insurance, a Fairfax Financial company*

Speakers:

Melissa D. Tonn, *MD, Chief Medical Officer, Opus Medical*

Janet Cobb, *Senior Vice President of Medical Operations, Concentra*

Dr. Latoya Abbott, *DNP, MSN, ANP-BC, Global Occupational Health Services, Director, Marriott International, Inc.*

Mary Ann Lubeskie, *Senior Vice President of Managed Care, TRISTAR*

Medical Issues and Case Management Breakout (Continued)

Crystal Ballroom C (Entrance to G2)

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #2503

The Use and Efficacy of Injectable Therapies in Workers' Compensation

The presentation outlines an evidence-informed, patient-centered approach to using injection therapy in musculoskeletal and spine pain care. While emphasizing that noninvasive treatments should be optimized first, the speakers (all highly experienced senior clinicians) will describe a structured framework for deciding when injections are appropriate. This framework focuses on careful patient selection; safety and risk mitigation; comparison with non-injection options; and clear, realistic functional goals and expected outcomes. The speakers will also review when injections — including epidural steroid injections (ESIs), anesthetics, corticosteroids, and emerging biologic therapies — may be beneficial or risky, and position injection treatment options within a value-based continuum of care focused on functional recovery.

Moderator:

Tron Emptage, *Chief Clinical Officer, Optum*

Speaker:

Robert Hall, *Medical Director, Optum*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #2504

The Hidden Drivers of Claim Outcomes: A Practical Behavioral Health Playbook for Catastrophic and Complex Cases

Behavioral health is the hidden driver behind most stalled catastrophic and complex claims, yet it rarely presents itself as a clear diagnosis. Our moderated panel will unpack a practical, repeatable playbook for spotting psychosocial risk early, removing SDOH barriers that masquerade as noncompliance, and escalating support through a stepped framework. Participants will leave with decision-point protocols, a clear RTW prescription model, and a metric outcomes dashboard they can implement immediately.

Moderator:

Pam Bloom-Pugliese, *Director, Product Management, ODG by MCG*

Speakers:

Michael Lacroix, *Medical Director, The Hartford*

Kathy Galia, *President, Paradigm*

OSHA 10-Hour Construction Industry Training

8:45 am – 4:15 pm

Magnolia Ballroom 10

Moderator:

Mylene Kellerman, *Program Director, University of South Florida OSHA Training Institute Education Center*

Speaker:

Michelle Demarest, *Safety & Health Instructor, USF, OSHA Training Institute*

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2600

Focus Four Hazards: Electrocution

This session covers the “BE SAFE” acronym (Burns, Electrocution, Shock, Arc Flash, Fire, Explosions) and how to work safely around overhead power lines and energized equipment.

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2601

Focus Four Hazards: Struck By

This session addresses hazards from falling objects, swinging equipment, or moving vehicles. It emphasizes the importance of high-visibility clothing and “line of fire” awareness.

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2602

Focus Four Hazards: Caught In/ Between

This session focuses on hazards where a worker could be crushed or pinched, such as unguarded machinery, rotating equipment, or trench cave-ins.

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #2603

Personal Protective Equipment and Health Hazards in Construction

This session teaches you how to use and maintain gear such as hard hats, safety glasses, and gloves. It clarifies that PPE is the “last line of defense” after engineering controls. Identifies “invisible” killers like silica dust, lead, asbestos, and noise. This module covers how to recognize chemical hazards through Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and the Global Harmonized System (GHS) of labeling.

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #2604

Excavation

This session covers the specific dangers of trenching. It explains the “Slope it, Shore it, Shield it” methods used to prevent soil collapse, which is a leading cause of death in excavation work.

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #2605

Fire Protection and Prevention

This session focuses on the “Fire Tetrahedron,” proper storage of flammable materials, and how to correctly use a fire extinguisher (the PASS method).

Workplace Safety and Health Breakout

8:45 am – 4:30 pm

Magnolia Ballrooms 13-15

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2700

Proactive Measures: Workplace Violence Prevention and Response

This course is designed to equip participants with the essential knowledge and skills to proactively address workplace violence. Participants will learn to identify potential risk factors and warning signs of violence. The class will emphasize the importance of creating a safe and respectful work environment, developing comprehensive prevention strategies, and implementing effective response protocols. Participants will gain insights into legal frameworks, best practices for crisis management, and techniques for enhancing communication and cooperation among employees. By the end of the course, attendees will be enlightened to contribute to a culture of safety and vigilance in their workplace, ensuring a healthier and more secure environment for all.

Moderator:

Gary Lopez, *Senior Risk Control Consultant, Arthur J. Gallagher*

Speaker:

Jeffrey Erb, *Special Agent Supervisor, Florida Department of Law Enforcement*

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2701

How AI Is Reshaping the Workforce and Redefining Safety

Artificial intelligence has rapidly become an element of safer, smarter, and more adaptive workplaces. From wearable sensors and computer vision to machine learning and predictive analytics, AI is transforming how organizations identify hazards, redesign jobs, and prevent injuries before they occur. As work itself evolves, so does the nature of risk. This session examines how AI-driven technologies are impacting workplace safety and job transformation, while reshaping workers' compensation strategies. Attendees will explore real-world applications, including reimagined ergonomics, predictive modeling for injury prevention, and real-time analytics that support earlier intervention and improved claims outcomes. The session will also address the workers' compensation implications of AI adoption, including risk management, data governance, ethical considerations, and the balance between innovation and responsibility in protecting the workforce.

Moderator:

Jim Smith, *National Risk Control, Regional Leader, Arthur J. Gallagher*

Speakers:

Don Bedford, *Senior Vice President Excess Workers' Compensation Underwriting, Safety National*

Andrea Shopper, *AVP - Underwriting, Safety National*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2702

Slip/Trip/Falls – A leading loss driver of claims

The presentation will cover the causes of slip, trip, and fall incidents, along with risk intervention strategies to reduce such claims. It will also highlight effective prevention methods to minimize these types of injuries. Attendees will gain a clear understanding of these claims and the associated risk mitigation strategies. This knowledge will help them implement measures that lead to a reduction in slip, trip, and fall claims.

Moderator:

Gary Lopez, *Senior Risk Control Consultant, Arthur J. Gallagher*

Speaker:

Jim Smith, *National Risk Control, Regional Leader, Arthur J. Gallagher*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #2703

From Risk to Resilience: Preventing Fatalities and Auto Related Workers' Compensation Exposure

This session emphasizes shifting from reactive responses to motor vehicle crashes to proactive prevention strategies. It identifies motor vehicle crashes as a leading cause of occupational fatalities and severe workers' compensation losses. Key risk factors include speeding, distraction, fatigue, and seatbelt non-use, which drive severe injuries, long-term disability, and liability exposure. The presentation highlights the role of telematics and data-driven insights in identifying high-risk driving behaviors early. These tools enable proactive intervention, targeted coaching, and effective injury prevention. By integrating vehicle safety into enterprise risk management strategies, organizations can reduce fatalities, control claim severity, and limit liability exposure. Attendees will gain practical strategies and real-world insights to address auto risks effectively. The session provides a roadmap to transform vehicle safety into a high-value prevention opportunity, protecting employees and enhancing business stability.

Moderator:

Gary Lopez, *Senior Risk Control Consultant, Arthur J. Gallagher*

Speaker:

Bryan Campbell, *Director of Risk Management, Massey Services, Inc.*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #2704

Using Pre-Employment-Fitness for Duty and Return-to-Work: Proactive Approach in Managing Workers' Compensation

This session will discuss how we can take a proactive approach to managing workers' compensation through pre-employment fitness-for-duty evaluations and return-to-work programs. Imagine being able to identify whether a candidate is physically ready to handle the demands of a job before they even start—that's what fitness-for-duty evaluations do. They help us reduce the risk of injuries by ensuring the right people are in the right roles. Now, when injuries do happen, return-to-work programs are key to getting employees back on their feet and back to work safely. These programs allow us to offer modified duties or transitional roles, keeping employees engaged while minimizing downtime and costs. By combining these two strategies, we're not just managing risks—we're creating a safer, healthier, and more productive workplace for everyone.

Moderator:

Jim Smith, *National Risk Control, Regional Leader, Arthur J. Gallagher*

Speakers:

Lisa Love, *Senior Claim Advocate, Gallagher Global Brokerage*

David Terry, *Attorney, McConaughay, Coonrod, Weaver & Stern, P.A.*

3:15 pm – 4:30 pm Course #2705

OSHA Update and Research Project-Why Employees do not Report Unsafe Acts and Practices

OSHA's regulations and enforcement policies are constantly evolving, requiring organizations to stay updated to proactively prepare for inspections and ensure compliance with key standards. The first part of this session will cover recent OSHA developments to help participants navigate these changes effectively. The second part of this session is related to the reluctance of workers to report unsafe acts due to fear of retaliation, cultural norms, and systemic barriers. To better understand why workers are not reporting unsafe practices or conditions, Eastern Kentucky University conducted a research to determine why workers failed to report or under report these unsafe practices and conditions. The presentation will provide the audience the findings and how to improve reporting to prevent future injury events. This underreporting delays interventions and results in inaccurate injury data, complicating risk identification and prevention efforts.

Moderator:

Gary Lopez, *Senior Risk Control Consultant, Arthur J. Gallagher*

Speaker:

Barry Spurlock, *Attorney, Crump Spurlock*

National Workers' Compensation Judiciary College

Presented by The National Association of
Workers' Compensation Judiciary, Inc.



**Registration Is Required To Attend
The National Workers' Compensation
Judiciary College. See www.nawcj.org.**

You Must Be An Adjudicator or Regulator To Attend.

8:45 am – 8:00 pm

Grand Ballrooms 4-6

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #2300

Live Surgical Showcase: Inside the Operating Room

Presented by Orlando Orthopaedic Center

Palms Ballroom – Canary

This live broadcast offers workers' compensation professionals exclusive, real-time access inside the operating room, delivering a front-row view of surgical excellence in action. Through step-by-step commentary and an interactive Q&A with the surgical team, attendees—including adjusters and case managers—will gain critical clinical context to better understand treatment decisions, procedural considerations, and patient outcomes. This dynamic learning experience bridges the gap between clinical care and claims management, empowering participants with insights they can immediately apply in their roles.

Moderator:

Steven Weber, *Surgeon, Orlando Orthopaedic Center*

Speaker:

Sebastian Rivera, *Surgeon, Orlando Orthopaedic Center*

10:00 am – 10:50 am

Remembering the Basics of Legal Writing and Bridging the Gap to a New Generation of Practitioners

The days of IRAC were long and true, and are still used for test-taking purposes, but students today are learning CREAC as the structure for legal analytical writing when writing for practice. Our communication will be enhanced by understanding their formatting, and perhaps by adjusting ours. This session will include overviews of how lawyers are currently being instructed, challenges in legal writing generally, and ways that our structure, context, and product can provide better service to the parties and practice.

Kristy D'Angelo-Corker, *Associate Professor of Law, Barry University*

11:00 am – 11:50 am

Working with Self-Represented Litigants

Self-represented litigants pose a wide range of challenges. This session will explore best practices for maintaining neutrality while ensuring access to justice. The discussion will include communication and courtroom management techniques, ethical considerations and tools to promote rareness, efficiency and respect where one form more parties lack representation.

Gabe Coggiola, *Commissioner, South Carolina Workers' Compensation Commission*

Lisa Lowe, *Judge, Tennessee Court of Workers' Compensation Claims*

Tonya Clemons, *Judge, Kentucky Department of Workers' Claims*

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Lunch Grand Ballrooms 1-2

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Bizarre, Unusual, and Pivotal Workers' Compensation Cases from 2025 and 2026

Commissioner Marshall will lead a lively, interactive discussion of bizarre, interesting, and pivotal workers' compensation cases from across the Country for 2025 and 2026. There will be plenty of opportunities to ponder and learn. Don't miss the chance to weigh in and offer your opinion on why some workers' compensation courts got it right or got it wrong!

Wesley Marshall, *Commissioner, VA Workers' Comp. Commission*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm

The Limitations of Memory: Implications for Evaluating Witness Credibility

In courts of law, witness testimony inherently relies on the individual's memory. However, there are limits to human memory and unintentional errors can be made. Learn more about the science of memory and its implications for assessing witness credibility.

Joyce Lacy, *Clinical Associate Professor, University at Buffalo, SUNY*

3:20 pm – 4:20 pm

Interacting With Those With Whom They Work: How Judges Got Themselves In Trouble

There is no shortage of ways judges can run afoul of ethical standards designed to foster public confidence in the judiciary's impartiality, integrity, and professionalism. One frequent source of difficulty for judges stems from how judges interact with court clerks, court staff, colleagues, and others. This session focuses on a judge's ethical obligations when dealing with those with whom they work and the myriad of ways judges have gotten themselves in trouble while doing so.

Marshall Davidson, *Chief Disciplinary Counsel, TN Board of Judicial Conduct*

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

NAWCJ Dinner Big John's Rockin' BBQ

Risk Managers Breakout

9:55 am – 4:15 pm

Grand Ballroom 7A

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2800

Voices of Workers' Compensation Leadership: Challenges, Optimism, and Proven Successes

This panel session features senior leaders from across the workers' compensation ecosystem—a broker, a large employer, and a major carrier—sharing candid perspectives on today's most pressing industry challenges. Panelists will discuss emerging trends and innovations shaping the future of workers' compensation and highlight proven strategies and successes that risk managers can apply within their own programs.

Moderator:

William Liebler, *Chief Claims Officer N.A., Marsh*

Speakers:

Dennis Tierney, *National Director of WC Claims, Marsh*

Claude Howard, *Vice President, Travelers*

Luke Harrison, *President - Walmart Claim Services, Inc., Walmart*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2801

Choose Your Risk Management Adventure

Hot topics in risk will be decided by the audience. Our panelists will have six or seven pre-determined items and poll the attendees on what to discuss based on interest. This will be an engaging and exciting session focusing on current risks in the commercial insurance space.

Moderator:

Steve Figliuolo, *Principal Program Lead - Claims, Chick-fil-A, Inc.*

Speakers:

Lloyd Brown, *Claims Manager -Risk Management and Safety, Wawa, Inc.*

Kurt Leisure, *Vice President, Risk Services, The Cheesecake Factory Incorporated*

Sharon Delguercio, *Director, Workers' Compensation, Publix Super Markets Inc.*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #2802

Turning Claim Data into Action: Targeted Closure Strategies

Organizations are awash in claim data, but turning that information into concrete, measurable outcomes remain a challenge. This session will focus on how we can translate analytics into targeted closure strategies that reduce cycle time, lower indemnity and expense costs, and improve reserving accuracy. Panelists will discuss practical approaches to segmenting claim portfolios, identifying early intervention opportunities, aligning resources to the right files at the right time, and measuring the impact of closure initiatives. Attendees will come away with actionable ideas to move from dashboards and reports to real-world claim results.

Moderator:

Leslie Batterson, *Director, Claims and Business Partner Solutions, Aon*

Speakers:

Jasmine Gilbert, *Head of Data, Analytics & AI, North America – Global Risk Consulting, Aon*

Ryan Murphy, *Vice President, Product- Enterprise Claims, CorVel Corporation*

Kurt Leisure, *Vice President, Risk Services, The Cheesecake Factory Incorporated*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #2803

Behind the Spotlight: Risk Management and Workers' Compensation in Sports & Entertainment

The Sports and Entertainment industry presents some of the most unique and complex challenges in risk management and workers' compensation—from athlete injuries and performer safety to large-scale event operations and evolving regulatory landscapes. This session brings together leading experts from the Sports Entertainment Risk Management Association (SERMA) for an insider look at the strategies, lessons, and innovations shaping this dynamic sector.

Moderator:

Rich Lenkov, *Attorney, Downey & Lenkov LLC*

Speakers:

Polly James, *Sr. Dir., Risk Mgmt., Feld Entertainment Inc.*

Robert Tran, *Risk Manager, Tampa Bay Buccaneers*

Tommy Van Deman, *Assistant Vice President, Workers' Compensation Claims, Berkley Entertainment*

Bill Dolamore, *Assistant Athletic Director – Procurement Services and Risk Management, University Athletic Association, Inc. (University of Florida)*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #2804

Workplace Violence

How does human behaviors impact the workplace? What happens when there is a violent reaction? This session aims to tackle the issues on workplace violence and how human behaviors correlate and play a role in both prompting a triggered response, as well as how it can be used as a tool to prevent events.

Moderator:

Steve Figliuolo, *Principal Program Lead - Claims, Chick-fil-A, Inc.*

Speakers:

Claire Muselman, *COO / Professor, WorkersCompensation.com / Drake University*

Tish Cooke, *Account Manager, CCMSI*

Kara Sepulveda, *President, Head of Property & Casualty TPA Claims, Davies North America*

Longshore and Harbor Workers' Act, Jones Act, and Defense Base Act Breakout

9:55 am – 4:15 pm

Grand Ballrooms 13-14

9:55 am – 10:55 am Course #2900

Government Shutdowns and Impact on OWCP and OALJ

Government shutdowns create immediate and often unpredictable disruptions to the administration of claims under the Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act and the Defense Base Act. This seminar examines how shutdowns affect the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) and the Office of Administrative Law Judges (OALJ), including delays in benefit payments, claim processing, informal conferences, hearings, and issued decisions. Attendees will gain practical insight into what continues, what stops, and how practitioners can protect clients' interests, manage deadlines, and navigate procedural uncertainty when federal operations are partially or fully suspended.

Moderator:

Robert Bamdas, *Attorney, Schouest, Bamdas, Soshea & BenMaier & Eastham*

Speakers:

Josie Azuma, *Attorney, Blue Williams, LLC*

Elis Rojas, *Attorney, R+C Litigators, PLLC*

Carrie Bland, *Associate Chief Administrative Law Judge (Ret.), U.S. Department of Labor (Ret.)*

11:00 am – 12:00 pm Course #2901

Streamlining Administration of Claims Before the OALJ

Efficiently navigating claims before the Office of Administrative Law Judges is critical to reducing delays, controlling costs, and achieving timely resolutions in Longshore and Defense Base Act litigation. This seminar examines practical strategies for streamlining proceedings before the OALJ, including effective case management, motion practice, discovery control, use of stipulations, and leveraging procedural tools to narrow issues and avoid unnecessary hearings. Attendees will gain actionable insights into best practices that promote efficiency while maintaining fairness and compliance in administrative adjudication.

Moderator:

Robert Bamdas, *Attorney, Schouest, Bamdas, Soshea & BenMaier & Eastham*

Speakers:

Howard Grossman, *Attorney, Grossman Attorneys at Law*

Daniel Smart, *Attorney, Thomas Quinn*

Tracy Daly, *President and Chief Mediator, Judges ADR*

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #2902

Coverage and Waivers Under the Defense Base Act

The Defense Base Act extends workers' compensation coverage far beyond U.S. borders, yet coverage disputes remain one of the most litigated and misunderstood aspects of DBA practice. This seminar provides a practical overview of who is covered, what employment activities trigger coverage, and

how courts and the Department of Labor analyze threshold issues such as situs, contract scope, nationality, and causal connection. Attendees will gain clarity on common coverage pitfalls and learn how early coverage determinations can shape the outcome of DBA claims. Attendees will learn how waivers are requested and applied, which employees can—and cannot—be waived from coverage, and how waiver determinations impact jurisdiction, benefits, and litigation strategy in DBA claims.

Moderator:

Robert Bamdas, *Attorney, Schouest, Bamdas, Soshea & BenMaier & Eastham*

Speakers:

Brad Soshea, *Attorney, Schouest Bamdas Soshea BenMaier*

Stephanie Brown, *Attorney, Merrigan Brown, PC*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #2903

Navigating Claims in Concurrent Jurisdiction States under the Longshore Act and State Workers' Compensation

The intersection of the Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act and state workers' compensation systems continue to create complex jurisdictional and strategic challenges for practitioners. This seminar examines concurrent jurisdiction principles recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court, including the "twilight zone," and explores how differing state approaches—concurrent versus exclusive—affect claim filing, benefits exposure, and litigation strategy. Attendees will gain practical guidance on identifying jurisdictional traps, managing parallel claims, and advising clients when federal and state workers' compensation remedies overlap.

Moderator:

Robert Bamdas, *Attorney, Schouest, Bamdas, Soshea & BenMaier & Eastham*

Speakers:

Brian McElreath, *Attorney, Lueder, Larkin & Hunter, LLC*

Ralph Lorberbaum, *Attorney, Zipperer, Lorberbau, Beauvais and Gotwalt, P.C.*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #2904

Maritime Personal Injury Claims and Defenses Looking at Recent Litigation Trends and Strategies

Maritime personal injury litigation continues to evolve, with claims facing increased scrutiny from governments, courts and juries, with claims arising from cruise ships, charter vessels and recreational boating presenting distinct jurisdictional and liability challenges. This seminar examines recent trends affecting seamen, passengers and other maritime workers, including emerging damages theories, forum selection issues and evolving standards for negligence, unseaworthiness and notice. Attendees will gain practical insight into effective defenses, risk mitigation strategies and key distinctions between the different bodily injury claimants in today's maritime litigation landscape.

Moderator:

Robert Bamdas, *Attorney, Schouest, Bamdas, Soshea & BenMaier & Eastham*

Speaker:

Michelle Otero Valdes, *Attorney, Law Offices of Michelle Otero Valdes LLC*

Louis Holzberg, *Attorney, Morgan & Morgan*

Liability Breakout

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Grand Ballroom 8A

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #3000

Managing Liability Litigation in a Changing Environment

In today's evolving liability landscape, organizations face increasing pressure to manage claims efficiently, reduce uncertainty, and improve outcomes. This session will explore practical strategies for strengthening general liability litigation management—beginning with how companies can better structure their internal processes and partnerships to drive more consistent, cost effective results. We will examine the growing role of technology, data, and analytics in modern claims handling, including how emerging tools can improve decision making, streamline litigation workflows, and identify trends before they become costly exposures. The discussion will also outline the current state of the liability environment and the factors contributing to rising claim severity and complexity across industries. Finally, we will address how employers can constructively participate in broader conversations about the civil justice system, including their role in supporting fair, efficient, and balanced approaches to resolving disputes. Participants will leave with practical insights and a clearer understanding of the tools, trends, and collaborative efforts shaping the future of liability litigation management.

Moderator:

Max Koonce, *Chief Claims Officer, Sedgwick*

Speakers:

Richard Mangan, *Attorney, Rissman, Barrett, Hurt, Donahue, McLain & Mangan, P.A.*

Michael Baumel, *Senior Vice President, Chief Claims Officer, Old Republic International*

Lindsey Harris, *Vice President, Risk Management, Dollar Tree*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #3001

Preventing the “Big Loss” in Liability Litigation

“Three things get Risk Managers fired – fraud in your department, under reserving and the unexpected big loss” – Charlie Martin former Managing Director Marsh, former Senior Director Willis. The big loss in liability litigation has always been a problem. Even before nuclear and thermonuclear verdicts, social inflation, litigation funding and litigation abuse, unexpectedly taking a big verdict or losing too many smaller cases could get risk and claims managers fired or at the least be considered “CLMs” – career limiting moves. In this presentation, three eminent professions- a defense trial attorney and “parachute counsel”, the “Dean” of the South Florida Plaintiff’s Bar, and a Risk Manager in the high peril world of industrial construction, discuss mistakes that risk and claims managers and in house counsel make in handling litigation that get them into real trouble and what you can do to prevent these mistakes. This isn’t just 4 old guys telling litigation war stories, it is a guide to being successful in the increasingly challenging world of personal injury litigation.

Moderator:

Marc Salm, *VP Risk Management, Publix Super Markets*

Speakers:

Stu Miller, *Attorney, Wilson Elser*

Stuart Grossman, *Attorney, Grossman Roth Yaffa Cohen*

Jerry Heim, *Corporate Risk Manager, Riggs Distler*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #3002

Unmasking Liability Fraud: Analytics, AI and Action for Smarter Prevention

Fraud in liability claims continues to be one of the most significant challenges in our industry, costing billions of dollars annually. This session brings together leading experts to explore the current state of liability fraud, leveraging industry benchmarks to highlight its scale, complexity, and impact. The panel will dive into how advanced analytics, big data, and AI are transforming fraud detection—flagging suspicious activity across portfolios, identifying patterns linked to fraudulent actors such as healthcare providers, vendors, and attorneys, and uncovering hidden schemes. Attendees will gain valuable insights into how analytics can turn red flags into actionable outcomes through collaboration with claims professionals, Special Investigations Units (SIU), and partnerships with law enforcement. The session will also provide a forward-looking perspective on next-generation tools, including AI-powered applications to detect manipulated evidence and innovative uses of big data to expose fraudulent practices. Participants will leave equipped with actionable strategies and a deeper understanding of how cutting-edge technology and operational excellence are reshaping fraud mitigation in liability claims, protecting businesses, and reducing risk.

Moderator:

Irina Simpson, *Executive Vice President – Workers’ Compensation / Gallagher Bassett*

Speakers:

Jerrold Smith, *Senior Counsel - Enterprise Claims & Anti-Fraud Program Lead, FedEx*

Parker Holloway, *Senior Vice President, Gallagher Bassett*

Jeremy Beroza, *Vice President - Claims Operations, Gallagher Bassett*

Chris Del Bove, *Attorney, Callahan & Fusco*

Medicare Secondary Payer Compliance Breakout

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Crystal Ballroom G1

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #3100

CMS Speaks: The Latest on Medicare Secondary Payer Compliance

Get the latest MSP compliance insight straight from CMS. This panel will address current program developments, agency priorities, frequently asked questions and practical best practices affecting workers' compensation claims and settlements. Attendees will leave with a clearer understanding of CMS's role, expectations and current areas of focus.

Moderator:

Kate Riordan, *VP, Policy and Product Innovation, Verisk*

Speakers:

Jackie Cipa, *Director, Division of MSP Program Operations, The Centers For Medicare & Medicaid Services*

Brian Broznowicz, *Health Insurance Specialist, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services*

Cynthia Gross, *Health Insurance Specialist, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services*

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #3101

The Part C and D Problem: Investigating and Resolving Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug Liens

Medicare Advantage (Part C) and Prescription Drug Plan (Part D) recovery claims continue to create challenges in workers' compensation settlements. This panel will examine practical strategies for identifying, investigating and resolving Part C and D liens, while addressing common obstacles involving plan administrators, recovery vendors and compliance partners.

Moderator:

Susan Lin, *Divisional AVP, Great American Insurance Group*

Speakers:

Patrick Czaprynski, *VP of Lien Solutions, IMPAXX*

Brian Bargender, *Business Consultant, Subrogation & Secondary Payer, Humana*

Keith Conrad, *Vice President of Legal - Subrogation, Machinify*

Kristi Holm, *Special Counsel, RAS Companies*

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #3102

Settle Smarter: How WCMSA Reporting Impacts Settlement Strategy

WCMSA reporting has changed the way parties evaluate and settle workers' compensation claims. This panel will explore how reporting affects submit versus non-submit decisions, settlement structure, documentation and post-settlement considerations, with a focus on practical strategies for reducing compliance risk while closing claims effectively.

Moderator:

Bridget Smith, *SVP Legal Strategy, Sanderson Firm*

Speakers:

Neha Pellegrino, *Senior MSP Compliance Counsel, ExamWorks Compliance Solutions*

Jayson Gallant, *Vice President of Client Development and Strategic Growth, Ametros*

Jennifer Katz, *Senior Counsel for Workers' Compensation Claims, Travelers*

Breakout for Public Entities

1:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Magnolia Ballrooms 1-3

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Course #3200

What's New with Presumptions in Florida?

From recognizing a potential claim to understanding how claims are decided, an employer faces a seemingly endless series of questions when confronting presumption claims. A panel of experts will address all of these issues, provide an update as to recent changes in the presumption Statute and answer all of your questions.

Moderator:

Steve Coonrod, Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver & Stern, P.A.

Speakers:

Paolo Longo, Attorney, Bichler & Longo, PLLC

Brittany O'Neil, Chief Strategy Officer, Florida Sheriffs Risk Management Fund

Steven Borzak, Cardiologist, Medical Specialists of the Palm Beaches

2:10 pm – 3:10 pm Course #3201

Medical-Legal Issues in First Responder Trauma: Cultural Competency, PTSD, Cardiovascular Injury, and Florida Law

It has been nearly 10 years since the Florida Legislature attempted to address the mental health crisis in the First Responder community and many other states have followed their lead. Unfortunately, many of these laws have created confusion and an enormous amount of litigation related to coverage and benefit entitlement. The medical issues surrounding mental/nervous injuries are complicated and the law is difficult to apply leaving First Responders uncertain about their rights and often at odds with their employers. This panel of experts will address the medical, legal and cultural issues surrounding mental health claims for First Responders in the workers' compensation system and suggest common sense reform to improve the approach to these claims.

Moderator:

Geoff Bichler, Attorney, Bichler & Longo

Speakers:

Dhvanit Vijapura, M.D., FL Occupational Psychiatry

Alexander Chernobelsky, Physician, Medical Specialists of the Palm Beaches, Inc.

Patrick Burns, LMHC, Caim Counseling

3:15 pm – 4:15 pm Course #3202

Best Practices for Managing Cancer and Heart/Lung Claims

This panel will explore best practices for effectively managing complex cancer and heart/lung workers' compensation claims within public entities. Featuring perspectives from an experienced insurance adjuster, a catastrophic care nurse, and a public employer, the discussion will highlight coordinated strategies that improve outcomes while controlling costs. Panelists will share real-world insights on early intervention, medical management, and return-to-work considerations for high-severity cases. Attendees will gain practical tools to enhance collaboration, ensure compassionate care, and navigate the unique challenges of these claims.

Moderator:

Larisa Featherstone, CEO, J&AOccuSure

Speakers:

Tanya Parker, Assistant Vice President-Client Engagement, Safety National

Debbie Windsor, Johnston and Associates

Valerie Horton Rakes, Risk Manager, City of Tampa

Wednesday, August 26

Official
Wi-Fi
Sponsor



Wi-Fi: Marriott Convention Level
Wi-Fi Password: BAUERFEIND

7:00 am – 3:00 pm

Shuttle bus service between the overflow hotel and the Marriott World Center is available. Refer to parking map & shuttle schedule. All parking onsite.

8:00 am – 11:00 am

Conference Registration and Information
Convention Level

Alliance of Women in Workers' Compensation

The Alliance of Women in Workers' Compensation is hosting a leadership event open to all conference attendees.

Separate Registration Is Required. Register at:
<https://allianceofwomen.org/>

7:30 am – 11:00 am

Crystal Ballroom H

7:30 am – 8:30 am

Registration and Breakfast

8:30 am – 8:45 am

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Moderator:

Jennifer Papillion, *Vice President of Technology Sales, Prime Health Services Inc*

8:45 am – 9:30 am

Course #3300

Keynote Address: ALL IN FOR leadership in motion - Finding Clarity and Leadership in an Era of Constant Change

Organizations today are navigating an unprecedented pace of change. Technology is accelerating faster than ever, artificial intelligence is reshaping how work is done, and leaders are expected to guide their teams through constant transformation while still delivering results. But effective transformation does not begin with systems or strategy. It begins with leadership.

In this session, we will explore what it means to lead through transformation in a world defined by complexity, speed, and constant noise. How do leaders maintain clarity when everything around them is evolving? How do we guide organizations through major changes while also taking inventory of ourselves as leaders? The conversation will examine the role of self-awareness, adapt-

ability, and intentional leadership in times of disruption. We will also explore how emerging technologies such as AI are reshaping leadership expectations and decision making across organizations. Most importantly, this discussion will challenge leaders to reflect on a foundational question. When transformation is happening around us every day, how do we find the best of ourselves so we can lead others through it?

This session will bring together industry leaders to share perspectives on navigating organizational change, embracing innovation, and leading with clarity in a rapidly evolving environment.

Moderator:

Jennifer Papillion, *Vice President of Technology Sales, Prime Health Services Inc*

9:30 am – 10:30 am

Table Collaboration Workshop: leadership in motion

10:30 am – 10:55 am

Raffle Drawing and Networking

10:55 am – 11:00 am

Closing Remarks

Moderator:

Jennifer Papillion, *Vice President of Technology Sales, Prime Health Services Inc*

AI and Technology Breakout

7:45 am – 11:55 am

Grand Ballroom 8A

7:45 am – 8:45 am Course #3400

Personal Productivity vs. Enterprise AI: Choosing the Right Approach for Workers' Compensation

ChatGPT and Copilot have revolutionized personal productivity, allowing a claims adjuster to summarize a single medical report in seconds. However, there is a massive—and often expensive—misunderstanding of the gap between individual utility and enterprise-grade operations. This session explores the critical distinction between using AI as a personal “digital assistant” and integrating it as core claims infrastructure. While out-of-the-box solutions are excellent for ad-hoc tasks, they lack the data lineage, security, and scalability required for high-volume Workers' Compensation workflows. We will dive into why “just using a chatbot” isn't a strategy for document ingestion and why true operational automation requires a dedicated engineering investment. Attendees will leave with a clear roadmap for deciding when to empower employees with off-the-shelf tools and when to pause and build the robust infrastructure necessary for long-term ROI.

Moderator:

Emily Cameron, *Head of Product and Customer Success, Crosstie*

Speakers:

Abby Torres, *Director of IT, ReEmployAbility*

Doug Gibb, *Executive Vice President, Workers' Compensation, Athens Administrators*

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #3401

State of the Art: AI in Workers' Compensation — A Florida Perspective

AI is no longer theoretical in Florida workers' compensation — it is reshaping how claims are evaluated, how defense strategy is built, and how liability is assigned. This session brings together a Florida defense attorney who has deployed AI in active practice, a legal technology architect, and national workers' comp thought leaders to deliver a frank, Florida-specific examination of what AI is actually doing inside firms, carriers, and claims operations today: where it accelerates outcomes, where it creates risk under Florida law, and why governance and human accountability — not the technology itself — are the difference between a competitive edge and a liability. Attendees will leave with a clear Florida regulatory framework, practical implementation guidance, and an honest assessment of what the defense bar must address now.

Moderator:

Brodie Cahill, *Founder, BrightPath Legal Inc.*

Speakers:

Alexander Almazan, *Attorney, Almazan Law*

Chris Brigham, *President, Brigham and Associates, Inc.*

Mark Pew, *Provost & Founding Partner of WorkCompCollege.com, WorkCompCollege.com*

Andy Anderson, *Co-Founder, OraClaim*

9:50 am – 10:50 am Course #3402

Early Warning: Spotting Delayed Recovery Risk Before a Claim Deteriorates

Delayed recovery claims represent a disproportionate share of workers' compensation costs, and the factors that drive poor outcomes—comorbidities, psychosocial barriers, claim complexity—are often present long before the file becomes a problem. The challenge is finding those signals in time to act. This session will open with a brief presentation of real, data-backed findings on the measurable impact these factors have on claim duration, medical spend, and return-to-work outcomes, giving attendees practical insights they can apply immediately. From there, panelists will explore how new technologies can identify claims at elevated risk for delayed recovery within days of FNOL and what patterns these models detect. Beyond identification, the session will address the critical question: what do you do once a claim is flagged? We'll discuss how early risk signals can trigger timely deployment of nurse case management, behavioral health resources, return-to-work coordination, supervisory review, or independent medical evaluation—interventions that are far more effective when initiated early rather than after a claim has already deteriorated. Attendees will leave with an understanding of what's now possible with AI-driven claim triage, how these tools provide adjusters with new insights, and practical recommendations for capturing additional data at first report of injury that can further improve early identification.

Moderator:

Kim Wiswell, *Director, Managed Care Solutions, Gradient AI*

Speakers:

Tom Veale, *President, Tristar Insurance Group*

Shannon Ford, *Senior Vice President Case Management, Paradigm*

Mike Theis, *AVP, Product Analytics and Business Strategy, Healthesystems*

Brook Rosenbaum, *General Manager, P&C, Gradient AI*

10:55 am – 11:55 am Course #3403

Building a Connected Claims Ecosystem for the Future of Workers' Compensation

Workers' compensation claims management is undergoing a fundamental shift as data-driven platforms, automation, and AI tools reshape how stakeholders connect across the claims lifecycle. This panel examines not whether to adopt these technologies, but how to deploy them in ways that enhance—rather than replace—human judgment, accountability, and empathy. Senior leaders from across the workers' compensation ecosystem will share real-world experiences implementing connected platforms, highlighting both measurable benefits and practical limitations. The discussion focuses on how automation can manage routine and exception-based tasks, freeing adjusters and case managers to concentrate on complex claims that demand nuanced decision-making and compassionate communication. Drawing perspectives from claims operations, technology providers, and industry observers, the session offers practical guidance on using connected systems to improve coordination, transparency, and outcomes from first notice of loss through return-to-work.

Moderator:

Frank Ferreri, *Media Director, WorkersCompensation.com*

Speakers:

Greg Hamlin, *Chief Claims Officer, Berkley Industrial Comp*

James Benham, *CEO & Co-Founder, Author, and Podcast Host, Terra*

Breakout on Multi-State Workers' Compensation Laws

Presented by the Workers' Compensation Defense Institute (WCDI)

8:00 am – 1:20 pm

Grand Ballrooms 7A & 7B and Crystal Ballrooms A & B

Participating states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas

8:00 am – 8:05 am

Welcome Session: "All Aboard"

Grand Ballroom 7A

Get ready to embark and "Cruise the Workers' Compensation Waters with the WCDI." Before we set sail on our journey, Captain Daniel Culpepper will make opening announcements and provide instructions to help you navigate through the day.

Daniel Culpepper, Attorney, Anderson Crawley & Burke, PLLC

8:05 am – 9:05 am Course #3500

Opening Session: "Meet the Crew"

Grand Ballroom 7A

As we set sail, join us for our opening session where we will introduce the talented crew guiding us through the legal waters across 14 states. Each port of call will recognize attorneys who will share the latest news in their home jurisdictions. Grab your boarding pass and get ready to meet the team that will be steering the voyage ahead!

Moderator:

Daniel Culpepper, Attorney, Anderson Crawley & Burke, PLLC

Speakers:

Rusty Watts, Attorney, Swift, Currie, McGhee & Hiers, LLP

Sarah Thomas, Attorney, Jones Jones LLC

Donnie Niehaus, Attorney, Walton Niehaus Law, PLLC

Kirsten Kaiser Kus, Attorney, Downey & Lenkov LLC

Rich Lenkov, Attorney, Downey & Lenkov LLC

Jennifer Morris Jones, Attorney, Cranfill Sumner LLP

Ryan Reed, Attorney, Flahive, Ogden & Latson

Hanna Williams, Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver, Stern, P.A.

Chris McCue, Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver, Stern, P.A.

Regan Cobb, Attorney, Holder, Padgett, Littlejohn + Prickett

Jeff Napolitano, Attorney, Juge Napolitano

Leah Keele, Attorney, Latham Keele Lehman PC

Stephen Christie, Attorney, Miller, Christie & Kinney, PC

Heather Douglas, Attorney, Manier & Herod

9:10 am – 10:10 am

Choose your port and dive in! In this intimate shore excursion, our crew breaks into three destinations, each charting a course through the claims-handling waters and paths to closure across jurisdictions. Navigate alongside our crew members as they map out the legal landscapes of their home ports. No life jacket required, just your toughest questions!

States will be divided into three breakout rooms. Attendees are welcome to attend any session and should feel free to move between rooms.

Excursion One - Alabama, Indiana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee Course #3501

Grand Ballroom 7A

Kyle Kinney, Attorney, Miller, Christie & Kinney, PC

Kirsten Kaiser Kus, Attorney, Downey & Lenkov LLC

Lori Whitworth, Attorney, Latham, Keele & Lehman PC

Regan Cobb, Attorney, Holder, Padgett, Littlejohn + Prickett

Heather Douglas, Attorney, Manier & Herod

Excursion One - Georgia, Illinois, Mississippi, North Carolina Course #3502

Grand Ballroom 7B (Entrance through corridor between Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

Martine Cumbermack, Attorney, Swift, Currie, McGhee & Hiers, LLP

Timothy Furman, Attorney, Downey & Lenkov LLC

Dan Baker, Attorney, Anderson, Crawley & Burke, PLLC

Jerri Simmons, Attorney, Cranfill Sumner LLP

Hanna Williams, Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver, Stern, P.A.

Excursion One - Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, New York, Texas Course #3503

Crystal Ballrooms A & B

Chris McCue, Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver, Stern, P.A.

Jeff Napolitano, Attorney, Juge Napolitano

Sarah Thomas, Attorney, Jones Jones LLC

Kim Newman, Attorney, Walton Niehaus Law PLLC

Ryan Reed, Attorney, Flahive, Ogden & Latson

10:15 am – 11:00 am

"WCDI Lido Deck"

Grand Ballroom 7B (Entrance through corridor between Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

Head over to the Lido Deck for some fun and friendly competition! Test your skills or try your luck at our onboard games, and you just might sail away with a prize or two or three. Enjoy a mocktail shaken up by our very own crew members or small bites from our appetizer buffet while you mingle with fellow passengers.

Breakout on Multi-State Workers' Compensation Laws (Continued)

Grand Ballrooms 7A & 7B and Crystal Ballrooms A & B

11:05 am – 12:05 pm

Choose your port and dive in! In this intimate shore excursion, our crew breaks into three destinations, each charting a course through the claims-handling waters and paths to closure across jurisdictions. Navigate alongside our crew members as they map out the legal landscapes of their home ports. No life jacket required, just your toughest questions!

This is a repeat of the earlier excursion session allowing attendees a chance to visit another breakout and hear information on a different set of states.

States will be divided into three breakout rooms. Attendees are welcome to attend any session and should feel free to move between rooms.

Excursion Two - Alabama, Indiana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee Course #3504

Grand Ballroom 7A

Stephen Christie, Attorney, Miller, Christie & Kinney, PC

Kirsten Kaiser Kus, Attorney, Downey & Lenkov LLC

Leah Keele, Attorney, Latham Keele Lehman PC

Zack Jarrett, Attorney, Holder, Padgett, Littlejohn, and Prickett, LLC

Heather Douglas, Attorney, Manier & Herod

Excursion Two - Georgia, Illinois, Mississippi, North Carolina Course #3505

Grand Ballroom 7B (Entrance through corridor between Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

Thea Nanton-Persaud, Attorney, Swift, Currie, McGhee & Hiers

Rich Lenkov, Attorney, Downey & Lenkov LLC

Daniel Culpepper, Attorney, Anderson Crawley & Burke, PLLC

David Rhoades, Attorney, Cranfill Sumner LLP

Hanna Williams, Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver, Stern, P.A.

Excursion Two - Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, New York, Texas Course #3506

Crystal Ballrooms A & B

Chris McCue, Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver, Stern, P.A.

Matthew Putfark, Attorney, Juge, Napolitano, Ruli, Putfark & Pittman

Simeon Stamm, Attorney, Jones Jones LLC

Don Walton, Attorney, Walton Niehaus Law PLLC

Paul Stone, Attorney, Flahive, Ogden & Latson

12:10 pm – 1:10 pm

Choose your port and dive in! In this intimate shore excursion, our crew breaks into three destinations, each charting a course through the claims-handling waters and paths to closure across jurisdictions. Navigate alongside our crew members as they map out the legal landscapes of their home ports. No life jacket required, just your toughest questions!

This is a repeat of the earlier excursion session allowing attendees a chance to visit another breakout and hear information on a different set of states.

States will be divided into three breakout rooms. Attendees are welcome to attend any session and should feel free to move between rooms.

Excursion Three - Alabama, Indiana, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee Course #3507

Grand Ballroom 7A

Kyle Kinney, Attorney, Miller, Christie & Kinney, PC

Kirsten Kaiser Kus, Attorney, Downey & Lenkov LLC

Lori Whitworth, Attorney, Latham, Keele & Lehman PC

Zack Jarrett, Attorney, Holder, Padgett, Littlejohn, and Prickett, LLC

Heather Douglas, Attorney, Manier & Herod

Excursion Three - Georgia, Illinois, Mississippi, North Carolina Course #3508

Grand Ballroom 7B (Entrance through corridor between Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

Mark Webb, Attorney, Swift, Currie, McGhee & Hiers LLP

Timothy Furman, Attorney, Downey & Lenkov LLC

Dan Baker, Attorney, Anderson, Crawley & Burke, PLLC

Charles Hicks, III, Attorney, Cranfill Sumner LLP

Hanna Williams, Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver, Stern, P.A.

Excursion Three - Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, New York, Texas Course #3509

Crystal Ballrooms A & B

Chris McCue, Attorney, McConnaughay, Coonrod, Weaver, Stern, P.A.

Keith Pittman, Attorney, Juge, Napolitano, Ruli, Putfark & Pittman

Sarah Thomas, Attorney, Jones Jones LLC

Donnie Niehaus, Attorney, Walton Niehaus Law, PLLC

Ryan Reed, Attorney, Flahive, Ogden & Latson

1:15 pm – 1:20 pm

Closing Session: "Disembark"

Grand Ballroom 7A

Door prize giveaways and distribution of the 2026 Multi-State Workers' Compensation Laws, Rules, Regulations & Forms.

Moderator:

Daniel Culpepper, Attorney, Anderson Crawley & Burke, PLLC

Florida Division of Workers' Compensation Breakout

8:45 am – 11:55 am

Grand Ballroom 8B (Entrance through corridor Grand Ballrooms 7 & 8)

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #3600

What's New and What's Next: Key Legislative and Regulatory Changes in Florida Workers' Compensation System

Pam Macon, Assistant Director, will provide attendees with an update on significant legislative and regulatory developments impacting Florida's workers' compensation system. The session will include discussion of statutory considerations under §440.13, F.S., along with recent and proposed legislative and regulatory recommendations. Ms. Macon will also highlight relevant administrative rule activity and key Division initiatives and projects.

Pam Macon, Assistant Director, Florida Division of Workers' Compensation

9:50 am – 10:50 am Course #3601

Decisions That Drive the System: First DCA, the Three-Member Panel, and Medical Services in Florida Workers' Compensation System

This session examines the key decision-makers shaping Florida's workers' compensation system, from appellate rulings to administrative oversight of medical reimbursement. Panelists will highlight recent First DCA decisions impacting medical services, along with the role of the Three-Member Panel in resolving reimbursement disputes and setting policy direction under §440.13, F.S.

Moderator:

Lisel Laslie, Bureau Chief, Florida Division of Workers' Compensation, Bureau of Employee Assistance and Ombudsman Office

Speakers:

Charlene Miller, Bureau Chief, Florida Division of Workers' Compensation, Bureau of Monitoring & Audit

Patrice Decuir, Senior Management Analyst Supervisor, Florida Division of Workers' Compensation

Keith Humphrey, Chief Legal Counsel, Florida Division of Workers' Compensation

10:55 am – 11:55 am Course #3602

From First Report to Final Audit: Managing Compliance in Complex Florida Workers' Compensation Claims

Division employees will provide an overview of statutory responsibilities related to claims handling from initial reporting through audit, including determining compensability, timely reporting requirements, and management of complex claims involving PTSD and catastrophic injuries. The session will address common compliance issues such as late First Reports of Injury, delays in indemnity payments, frequent audit findings, and the assessment of Penalty & Interest (P&I), along with trends identified through CPS and audit activities. Attendees will also gain insight into insurer and TPA roles and responsibilities in maintaining compliance throughout the life of the claim. Relevant statutory provisions include §§440.02(37), 440.093, 440.13, 440.15, 440.185, and 440.20, F.S.

Moderator:

Lisel Laslie, Bureau Chief, Florida Division of Workers' Compensation, Bureau of Employee Assistance and Ombudsman Office

Speakers:

Robert Abrego, Operations & Management Consultant Manager, Florida Division of Workers' Compensation

Derrick Richardson, Operations & Management Consultant Manager, Florida Division of Workers' Compensation

Workplace Safety and Health Breakout

8:45 am – 11:55 am

Crystal Ballroom J1

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #3700

Purpose, Mindset, and Workers' Compensation Outcomes: Applying PERMA to Safety, Health, and Recovery

Even in well-established safety programs, preventable incidents persist—not because technical controls are insufficient, but because the human system is under strain. Fatigue, stress, cognitive overload, and behavioral dynamics are powerful contributors to workplace risk, yet they often remain unaddressed within traditional safety and health frameworks. Workers' compensation outcomes are shaped by more than injury severity alone. Research shows that a lack of purpose is linked to higher injury risk, delayed recovery, and more complex claims. In this session, Dr. Scott Cherry and Dr. Les Kertay apply Seligman's PERMA (Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning & Accomplishment) model to explore how purpose and mindset influence recovery and return-to-work outcomes. They also highlight the role of workplace systems and leadership in fostering engagement and resilience and share practical strategies to improve claim outcomes and workforce performance.

Scott Cherry, *Chief Medical Officer, Axiom Medical*

Les Kertay, *Senior Consultant in Behavioral Health, Axiom Medical*

9:50 am – 10:50 am Course #3701

Designing Safer Systems: A Proactive Blueprint for Managing the Injury Lifecycle

This session equips safety professionals with practical, real-world strategies to build safer, more resilient systems that support both organizational performance and worker well-being. It addresses costly challenges such as inconsistent injury reporting, delayed treatment, and fragmented return-to-work processes. Using a systems-based approach, participants learn how to break down silos, strengthen collaboration, and streamline reporting and early clinical intervention. Through real-world examples, the program covers ergonomic and root cause assessments, coordinated care, mental health considerations, and emerging technologies to improve outcomes. Attendees leave with actionable, compliance-focused strategies to prevent injuries and create integrated, high-performing safety systems.

Heather Chapman, *Founder, Paradigm Safety*

Tracy Thornton, *Occupational Health & Claims Strategy Consultant, Paradigm Safety*

10:55 am – 11:55 am Course #3702

Setting Onsite Healthcare Up for Success

In today's rapidly evolving business environment, employers are looking for new and better ways to contribute to their employees' overall health and wellness. An onsite clinic allows you to customize a health program and services that meet your needs today, while still having the flexibility to change and grow with your business. But how do employers ensure success once they open an onsite clinic? A team of experienced professionals comprised of leadership from a leading onsite clinic provider and one of their successful Florida-based clients will discuss essentials for lasting onsite health care utilization and overall success.

Mark Faenza, *VP Onsite Sales, Concentra*

Latha Brubaker, *Senior Vice President Medical Operations, Concentra*

Scott Marting, *Director of Risk Management, Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners*

OSHA 10-Hour Construction Industry Training

9:50 am – 10:50 am

Crystal Ballroom J1

9:50 am – 10:50 am Course #3701

Designing Safer Systems: A Proactive Blueprint for Managing the Injury Lifecycle

This session equips safety professionals with practical, real-world strategies to build safer, more resilient systems that support both organizational performance and worker well-being. It addresses costly challenges such as inconsistent injury reporting, delayed treatment, and fragmented return-to-work processes. Using a systems-based approach, participants learn how

to break down silos, strengthen collaboration, and streamline reporting and early clinical intervention. Through real-world examples, the program covers ergonomic and root cause assessments, coordinated care, mental health considerations, and emerging technologies to improve outcomes. Attendees leave with actionable, compliance-focused strategies to prevent injuries and create integrated, high-performing safety systems.

Heather Chapman, *Founder, Paradigm Safety*

Tracy Thornton, *Occupational Health & Claims Strategy Consultant, Paradigm Safety*

Fraud Breakout

8:45 am – 11:55 am

Crystal Ballroom G1

Moderator:

Jim Hulett, *Vice President, Verisk*

Speakers:

Tom Donahue, *National Sales Director, Ethos Risk Services*

John Sargent, *Senior Vice President, Delta Group*

Tamara Martin, *Deputy District Attorney, San Diego District Attorney's Office*

Gene Donnelly, *SIU - AVP, Zenith Insurance Company*

Chris Welch, *Bureau Chief, Criminal Investigations Division / Bureau of Insurance Fraud (Florida)*

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #3800

Uncovering and Detecting Workers' Compensation Fraud

This first part of a three-part panel discussion, comprised of some members of the Coalition Against Insurance Fraud's Workers' Compensation Fraud Task Force, will look at how potentially fraudulent workers' compensation claims are uncovered and detected. The discussion will include workers' comp claimant fraud as well as premium and provider fraud. The panel will also discuss potential pitfalls if claims are handled improperly and the cost to the system and to individual policyholders when Injured Worker fraud is not pursued.

9:50 am – 10:50 am Course #3801

Investigating Workers' Compensation Fraud

The second part of a three-part panel discussion, comprised of some members of the Coalition Against Insurance Fraud's Workers' Compensation Fraud Task Force, will look at how potentially fraudulent workers' compensation claims are investigated. The discussion will include workers' comp claimant fraud as well as premium and provider fraud.

10:55 am – 11:55 am Course #3802

Prosecuting Workers' Compensation Fraud

The third part of our three-part panel discussion, comprised of some members of the Coalition Against Insurance Fraud's Workers' Compensation Fraud Task Force, will look at how workers' compensation fraud is prosecuted. The presentation will also address common legal hurdles, evidentiary requirements, and best practices for presenting complex fraud schemes in court. Real-world case studies will illustrate successful prosecutions and highlight lessons learned.

Medical Issues and Case Management Breakout

8:45 am – 11:55 am

Crystal Ballroom C (Entrance to G2)

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #3900

Psychiatrists Head-to-Head

Two forensic psychiatrists will present opposing perspectives on two physical-mental Workers' Compensation cases. Both will receive identical case facts but will interpret them differently—one with a more skeptical lens and the other with a supportive one. This format will allow the audience to observe how reasonable experts may diverge in clinical reasoning. While the cases will be revealed during the session, the discussion will cover themes such as over-medicalization, over-simplification, and factors that contribute to a persuasive Independent Psychiatric Evaluation (IPE). The session will close with practical guidance for stakeholders and examples of how inadequate psychiatric analysis can negatively affect cases.

Moderator:

P. Mark Glencross, *Director of Occupational Medicine and Team Member Health, Tampa General Hospital*

Speakers:

Megan Stockamp, *Physician, University of South Florida/Tampa General Hospital*

Amie Gerodimos, *Psychiatrist, Tampa General Behavioral Health Hospital, University of South Florida College of Medicine, Lifepoint Behavioral Health*

9:50 am – 10:50 am Course #3901

The Next Frontier in Brain and Spine Claims

This session explores these claims through injury, treatment, and improvement, with a focus on care coordination, real-world function, and return-to-work. It also examines how emerging technologies, such as advanced DME, smart home solutions, and AI-enabled tools, are beginning to support independence and improve outcomes. Attendees will gain practical insight into integrating these solutions while understanding cost, adoption, and liability considerations.

Moderator:

Claudia Rial, *VP of Sales & Client Relations, MTI America*

Speakers:

Zack Craft, *Senior Vice President, Complex Claims, MTI America*

Annette Griffith, *Senior Claims Analyst, American Airlines*

Gregory Fuller, *Attorney, Moore Ingram Johnson*

Bryan Conner, *Senior Manager, Workers' Compensation, American Airlines*

10:55 am – 11:55 am Course #3902

3D Printing in Workers' Compensation: Pioneering Applications at the Intersection of Innovation and Care

3D printing is advancing rapidly from a prototyping tool into a transformative force in medical treatment and pharmaceutical delivery, with applications ranging from customized implants and joint reconstruction to burn treatment and beyond — presenting significant and largely unexplored opportunities for the workers' compensation industry. This panel brings together a manufacturing applications specialist, a medical practitioner, and a pharmaceutical industry expert, moderated by a leader in cost containment, to examine where this technology stands today, where it is headed, and what that trajectory means for claims management, treatment pathways, and cost containment. As these applications move from emerging to mainstream, the regulatory framework governing 3D-printed medical devices, implants, and pharmaceuticals will evolve — raising important questions around FDA oversight, liability, quality standards, and reimbursement that our industry must begin anticipating now. This program is designed for claims professionals, medical care specialists, risk managers, and industry leaders who want to engage with these innovations while they are still emerging rather than scrambling to catch up once they become standard of care.

Moderator:

Mary Anne Hawrylak, *CEO and Founder, Kingstree Group*

Speakers:

Tyler Bryant, *Founder, industrial designer, Tyler Bryant Design LLC*

Robert Hall, *Medical Director, Optum*

Kevin Tribout, *Vice President of Public Policy and Regulatory Affairs, Optum*

Dave Breiter, *Vice President Regulatory, Clinical, Medical, and Health Economics, Medtronic*

Stacy Whalen, *Medical Management Director, Safety National*

Longshore and Harbor Workers' Act, Jones Act, and Defense Base Act Breakout

8:45 am – 11:55 am

Grand Ballrooms 13-14

8:45 am – 9:45 am Course #4000

Ethical and Practical Implications of Using AI in Longshore and Defense Base Act Litigation

As artificial intelligence tools become increasingly embedded in claims handling and litigation strategy, practitioners prosecuting and defending Longshore and Defense Base Act claims must navigate new ethical and procedural risks. This seminar examines how AI is being used in case evaluation, discovery, and briefing, while focusing on emerging concerns surrounding attorney client privilege, work product protection, and the potential for inadvertent waiver when AI tools are employed. Attendees will gain practical guidance on best practices, supervision obligations, and risk mitigation strategies in light of recent court decisions and evolving ethical guidance governing AI use in litigation.

Moderator:

Robert Bamdas, *Attorney, Schouest, Bamdas, Soshea & BenMaier & Eastham*

Speakers:

Kent Rogers, *Owner, Lodestar Law LLC*

Greg Buzzard, *Attorney, Markovich Grover*

9:50 am – 10:50 am Course #4001

Practical Claims Handling of Foreign National Claims under the Defense Base Act

Foreign national claims under the Defense Base Act present complex evidentiary and documentation issues that impact practitioners on both sides of the aisle. This session offers a practical look at how to evaluate and authenticate overseas medical records, verify physician licensing and clinic legitimacy, and address identity or documentation gaps that arise when claims originate in foreign and sometimes remote or unstable regions. Attendees will gain tools for assessing reliability, identifying inconsistencies, and navigating cross border evidentiary hurdles—skills essential for any attorney seeking to build a credible, well supported case under the DBA.

Moderator:

Robert Bamdas, *Attorney, Schouest, Bamdas, Soshea & BenMaier & Eastham*

Speakers:

Chase Zobec, *Attorney, Barnett, Lerner, Karsen, Zobec, P.A.*

Rick Rohn, *CEO, ISI Claims*

Hilary Jonczak, *Attorney, Sioli Alexander Pino*

Paul Almanza, *Judge, U.S. Department of Labor*

Heather Leslie, *Judge, U.S. Department of Labor*

10:55 am – 11:55 am Course #4002

Case Law Update

This session provides a focused update on recent and significant case law developments arising under the Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act and the Defense Base Act. Attendees will review key decisions from the Benefits Review Board, the Office of Administrative Law Judges, and the federal appellate courts addressing recurring and evolving issues such as coverage, causation, medical benefits, settlements, and procedural standards. The session is designed to equip practitioners with practical takeaways on how recent rulings are shaping claims handling, litigation strategy, and outcomes in Longshore and DBA cases.

Moderator:

Robert Bamdas, *Attorney, Schouest, Bamdas, Soshea & BenMaier & Eastham*

Speakers:

Christie Gibbons, *Attorney, Attorneys Jo Ann Hoffman & Associates P.A.*

Harleigh Miller, *Senior Associate, Lueder Larkin and Hunter LLC*

National Workers' Compensation Judiciary College

Presented by The National Association of
Workers' Compensation Judiciary, Inc.



**Registration Is Required To Attend
The National Workers' Compensation
Judiciary College. See www.nawcj.org.**

You Must Be An Adjudicator or Regulator To Attend.

9:00 am – 11:50 am

Grand Ballrooms 4-6

9:00 am – 9:50 am

Maintaining Your Mental and Physical Fitness for the Bench

Presenter(s) will illuminate common challenges of being on the bench and explore various ways you can maintain mental and physical fitness for a productive, rewarding and happy tenure of service.

Marcio Valladares

10:00 am – 10:50 am

Rise of the Machines: AI and the Future of Workers' Comp

An honest look at the technologies transforming the industry — the extraordinary promise, the significant dangers, and the choices that will determine whether they serve recovery or simply make the current system faster at doing the wrong things.

Bob Wilson, *President, WorkCompCollege.com*

John Koenig, *Director of Information Technology, Kentucky Employers' Mutual Insurance (KEMI)*

Michael Fish, *Attorney, Fish Nelson & Holden, LLC*

11:00 am – 11:50 am

Survey Says Workers' Comp!

Participants will step into a lively, workers' comp-themed version of the classic Family Feud game. Using real survey results collected from adjudicators, attendees will compete to guess the most common responses to practical, day to day challenges in workers' compensation adjudication.

Shannon Bruno Bishop, *Judge, Louisiana Works, Office of Workers' Compensation*

Pamela Johnson, *Judge, Tennessee Court of Workers' Compensation Claims*

Marriott Parking Map

1 Orlando World Center Marriott (OWCM)

(Exit 67 off of I-4, approximately .50 miles)

Valet (\$60.00 plus tax/daily) and self-parking (no charge) is available at the host hotel, the Orlando World Center Marriott on Sunday, August 23 through Wednesday, August 26. When entering the property, follow signs to the Self-Parking Garage.

2 Main (Self-Parking) Parking Garage

There is a covered walkway from the 3rd floor parking garage that leads to the Marriott Convention Center.

3 Secondary (Self-Parking) Parking Lot

4 Secondary (Self-Parking) Parking Garage

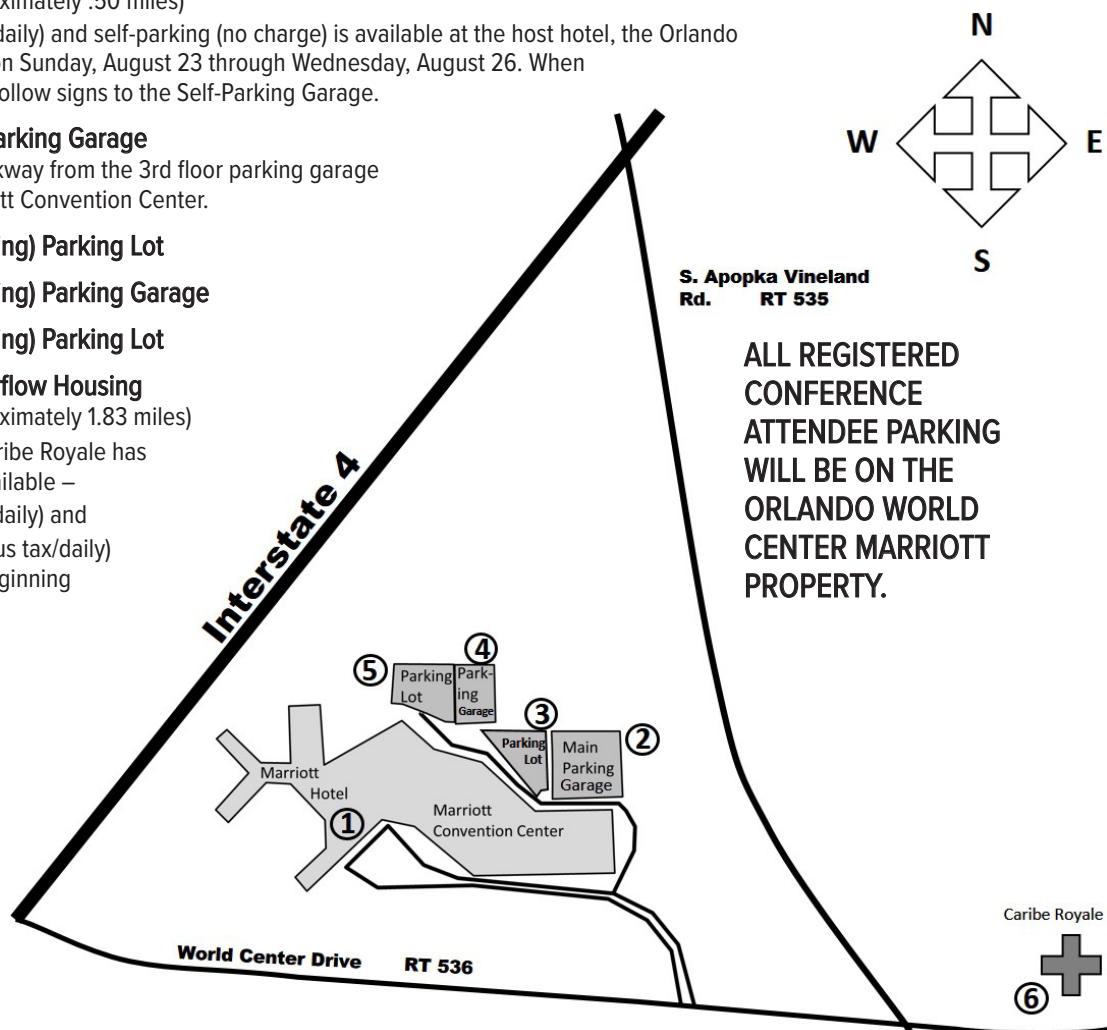
5 Secondary (Self-Parking) Parking Lot

6 Caribe Royale – Overflow Housing

(Exit 67 off of I-4, approximately 1.83 miles)

Overflow hotel, The Caribe Royale has hotel guest parking available –

Valet (\$45.00 plus tax/daily) and self-parking (\$34.00 plus tax/daily) with shuttle service, beginning Sunday, August 23.



Shuttle Schedule

Shuttle is provided for WCI registered guests staying at our overflow property, the Caribe Royale. The Shuttle will run continuously between the Caribe Royale and the Orlando World Center Marriott (OWCM) during the following hours:

CARIBE ROYALE TO OWCM

Sunday: 7:00 am – 12:00 midnight
 Monday: 6:30 am – 1:00 am
 Tuesday: 7:00 am – 12:00 midnight
 Wednesday: 7:00 am – 3:00 pm

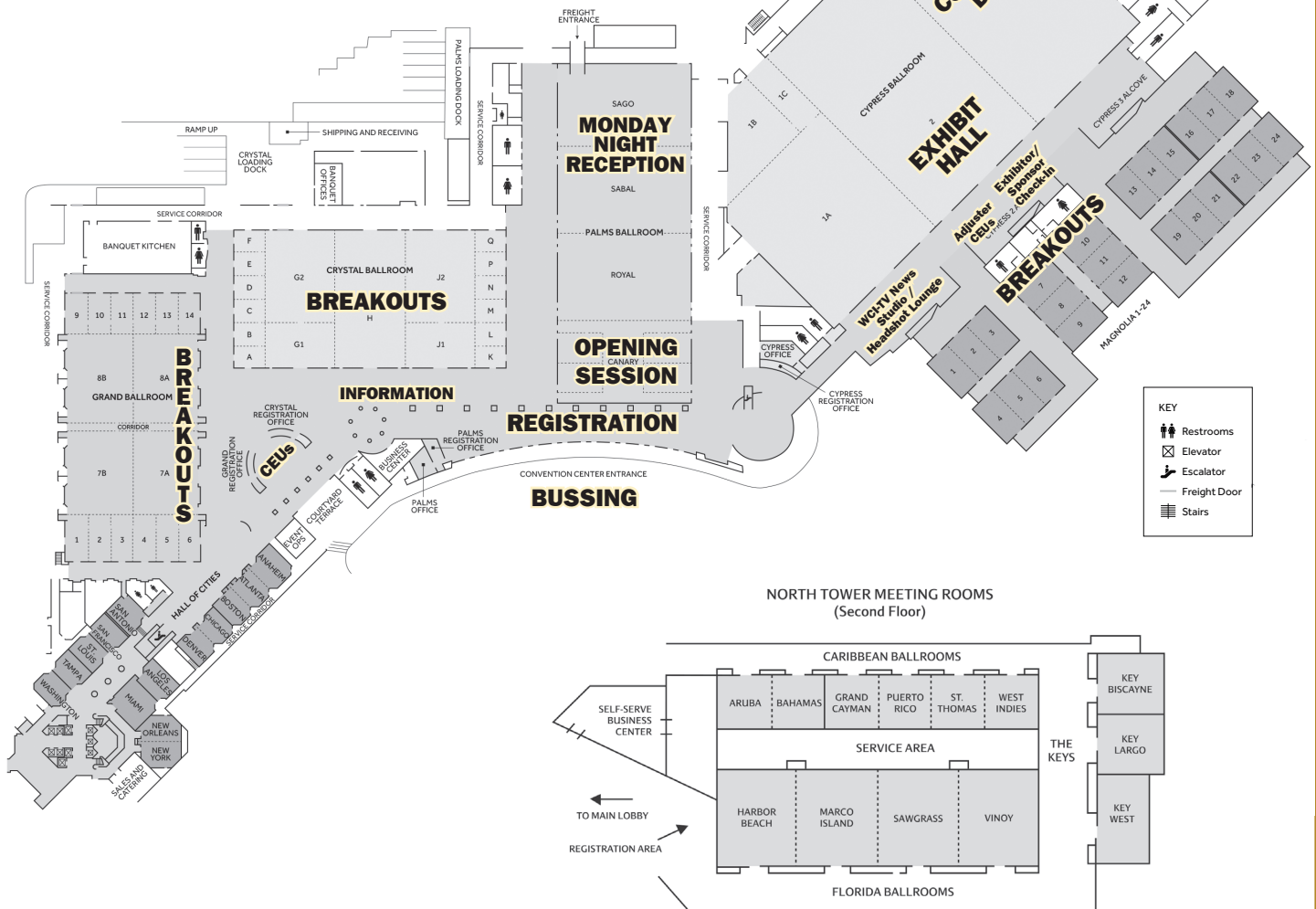
Transportation via a courtesy shuttle will be provided between the Caribe Royale and Marriott World Center from Sunday – Wednesday based on the WCI program agenda peak times. Check information posted in the hotel lobby for exact schedule.

Marriott Maps



ORLANDO WORLD CENTER
Marriott
RESORT & CONVENTION CENTER

MAIN CONVENTION CENTER SINGLE-LEVEL MEETING SPACE WITH EXPANSIVE FOYER SPACE



Refer to Auxiliary Meetings List for locations of luncheons & auxiliary meetings.