2013 Workers' Compensation Reform Act
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Effective July 2014, Tennessee's new Workers' Compensation Reform Act goes into effect. The new law is considered favorable to employers and involves a more efficient claims resolution process and lower administrative costs, and it also establishes a panel of judges that will take cases out of the crowded courts. The reform comes as a response to complaints with the current system, increased interest in private employers opting out, and perceptions of complications, red tape, and structure of workers' compensation benefits. Some say the current process does not provide a framework to efficiently get employees back to work in a timely manner.

For employees, they will see faster treatment, more expeditious handling of disputes and claims, and hopefully a faster return to work.

The new law changes the definition of an injury and puts additional requirements on physicians' being sure there is a reasonable degree of medical certainty - as opposed to speculation or possibility - that the injury is Workers' Compensation qualified.

In the new legislation only one panel of physicians is required, and each provider must be willing to treat workers' compensation patients. The new division can enforce penalties for panels that are improper and are not following rules of panel development.

Another change for employers is that cities will now be allowed to communicate with treating physicians, whereas, right now there is a signed waiver required before this can occur.

For more information about workers' compensation reform visit http://www.tn.gov/labor-wfd/wc_2013_ReformAct.shtml and or contact your MTAS HR Consultant.