

## **§9785. Reporting Duties of the Primary Treating Physician.**

(a) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) The “primary treating physician” is the physician who is primarily responsible for managing the care of an employee, and who has examined the employee at least once for the purpose of rendering or prescribing treatment and has monitored the effect of the treatment thereafter. The primary treating physician is the physician selected by the employer, the employee pursuant to Article 2 (commencing with section 4600) of Chapter 2 of Part 2 of Division 4 of the Labor Code, or under the contract or procedures applicable to a Health Care Organization certified under section 4600.5 of the Labor Code, or in accordance with the physician selection procedures contained in the medical provider network pursuant to Labor Code section 4616. A chiropractor shall not be a treating physician after the employee has received 24 chiropractic visits, unless the employer has authorized, in writing, additional visits. For purposes of this subdivision, the term “chiropractic visit” means any chiropractic office visit, regardless of whether the services performed involve chiropractic manipulation or are limited to evaluation and management.

(2) A “secondary physician” is any physician other than the primary treating physician who examines or provides treatment to the employee, but is not primarily responsible for continuing management of the care of the employee. A chiropractor shall not be a treating physician after the employee has received 24 chiropractic visits, unless the employer has authorized, in writing, additional visits. For purposes of this subdivision, the term “chiropractic visit” means any chiropractic office visit, regardless of whether the services performed involve chiropractic manipulation or are limited to evaluation and management.

(3) “Claims administrator” is a self-administered insurer providing security for the payment of compensation required by Divisions 4 and 4.5 of the Labor Code, a self-administered self-insured employer, or a third-party administrator for a self-insured employer, insurer, legally uninsured employer, or joint powers authority.

(4) “Medical determination” means, for the purpose of this section, a decision made by the primary treating physician regarding any and all medical issues necessary to determine the employee's eligibility for compensation. Such issues include but are not limited to the scope and extent of an employee's continuing medical treatment, the decision whether to release the employee from care, the point in time at which the employee has reached permanent and stationary status, and the necessity for future medical treatment.

(5) “Released from care” means a determination by the primary treating physician that the employee's condition has reached a permanent and stationary status with no need for continuing or future medical treatment.

(6) “Continuing medical treatment” is occurring or presently planned treatment that is reasonably required to cure or relieve the employee from the effects of the injury.

(7) “Future medical treatment” is treatment which is anticipated at some time in the future and is reasonably required to cure or relieve the employee from the effects of the injury.

(8) “Permanent and stationary status” is the point when the employee has reached maximal medical improvement, meaning his or her condition is well stabilized, and unlikely to change substantially in the next year with or without medical treatment.

(b)(1) An employee shall have no more than one primary treating physician at a time.

(2) An employee may designate a new primary treating physician of his or her choice pursuant to Labor Code §§4600 or 4600.3 provided the primary treating physician has determined that there is a need for:

(A) continuing medical treatment; or

(B) future medical treatment. The employee may designate a new primary treating physician to render future medical treatment either prior to or at the time such treatment becomes necessary.

(3) If the employee disputes a medical determination made by the primary treating physician, including a determination that the employee should be released from care, the dispute shall be resolved under the applicable procedures set forth at Labor Code sections 4061 and 4062. ~~or if~~ If the employee objects to a decision made pursuant to Labor Code section 4610 to modify, delay, or deny a treatment recommendation, the dispute shall be resolved under ~~the applicable procedures set forth at Labor Code sections 4061 and 4062~~ pursuant to Labor Code section 4610.5, if applicable, or otherwise pursuant to Labor Code section 4062. No other primary treating physician shall be designated by the employee unless and until the dispute is resolved.

(4) If the claims administrator disputes a medical determination made by the primary treating physician, the dispute shall be resolved under the applicable procedures set forth at Labor Code sections 4610, 4061 and 4062.

(c) The primary treating physician, or a physician designated by the primary treating physician, shall make reports to the claims administrator as required in this section. A primary treating physician has fulfilled his or her reporting duties under this section by sending one copy of a required report to the claims administrator. A claims administrator may designate any person or entity to be the recipient of its copy of the required report.

(d) The primary treating physician shall render opinions on all medical issues necessary to determine the employee's eligibility for compensation in the manner prescribed in subdivisions (e), (f) and (g) of this section. The primary treating physician may transmit reports to the claims administrator by mail or FAX or by any other means satisfactory to the claims administrator, including electronic transmission.

(e)(1) Within 5 working days following initial examination, a primary treating physician shall submit a written report to the claims administrator on the form entitled "Doctor's First Report of Occupational Injury or Illness," Form DLSR 5021. Emergency and urgent care physicians shall also submit a Form DLSR 5021 to the claims administrator following the initial visit to the treatment facility. On line 24 of the Doctor's First Report, or on the reverse side of the form, the physician shall (A) list methods, frequency, and duration of planned treatment(s), (B) specify planned consultations or referrals, surgery or hospitalization and (C) specify the type, frequency and duration of planned physical medicine services (e.g., physical therapy, manipulation, acupuncture).

(2) Each new primary treating physician shall submit a Form DLSR 5021 following the initial examination in accordance with subdivision (e)(1).

(3) Secondary physicians, physical therapists, and other health care providers to whom the employee is referred shall report to the primary treating physician in the manner required by the primary treating physician.

(4) The primary treating physician shall be responsible for obtaining all of the reports of secondary physicians and shall, unless good cause is shown, within 20 days of receipt of each report incorporate, or comment upon, the findings and opinions of the other physicians in the primary treating physician's report and submit all of the reports to the claims administrator.

(f) A primary treating physician shall, unless good cause is shown, within 20 days report to the claims administrator when any one or more of the following occurs:

(1) The employee's condition undergoes a previously unexpected significant change;

(2) There is any significant change in the treatment plan reported, including, but not limited to, (A) an extension of duration or frequency of treatment, (B) a new need for hospitalization or surgery, (C) a new need for referral to or consultation by another physician, (D) a change in methods of treatment or in required physical medicine services, or (E) a need for rental or purchase of durable medical equipment or orthotic devices;

(3) The employee's condition permits return to modified or regular work;

(4) The employee's condition requires him or her to leave work, or requires changes in work restrictions or modifications;

(5) The employee is released from care;

(6) The primary treating physician concludes that the employee's permanent disability precludes, or is likely to preclude, the employee from engaging in the employee's usual occupation or the occupation in which the employee was engaged at the time of the injury, ~~as required pursuant to Labor Code Section 4636(b)~~;

(7) The claims administrator reasonably requests appropriate additional information that is necessary to administer the claim. “Necessary” information is that which directly affects the provision of compensation benefits as defined in Labor Code Section 3207.

(8) When continuing medical treatment is provided, a progress report shall be made no later than forty-five days from the last report of any type under this section even if no event described in paragraphs (1) to (7) has occurred. If an examination has occurred, the report shall be signed and transmitted within 20 days of the examination.

Except for a response to a request for information made pursuant to subdivision (f)(7), reports required under this subdivision shall be submitted on the “Primary Treating Physician's Progress Report” form (Form PR-2) contained in Section 9785.2, or in the form of a narrative report. If a narrative report is used, it must be entitled “Primary Treating Physician's Progress Report” in bold-faced type, must indicate clearly the reason the report is being submitted, and must contain the same information using the same subject headings in the same order as Form PR-2. A response to a request for information made pursuant to subdivision (f)(7) may be made in letter format. A narrative report and a letter format response to a request for information must contain the same declaration under penalty of perjury that is set forth in the Form PR-2: “I declare under penalty of perjury that this report is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and that I have not violated Labor Code §139.3.”

By mutual agreement between the physician and the claims administrator, the physician may make reports in any manner and form.

(g) As applicable in section 9792.9.1, a written request for authorization of medical treatment for a specific course of proposed medical treatment, or a written confirmation of an oral request for a specific course of proposed medical treatment, must be set forth on the “Request for Authorization of Medical Treatment,” DWC Form RFA, contained in section 9785.5. A written confirmation of an oral request shall be clearly marked at the top that it is written confirmation of an oral request. The DWC Form RFA must include as an attachment documentation substantiating the need for the requested treatment.

[The draft DWC Form RFA will be provided with the Independent Medical Review draft regulations.]

~~(g)~~ (h) When the primary treating physician determines that the employee's condition is permanent and stationary, the physician shall, unless good cause is shown, report within 20 days from the date of examination any findings concerning the existence and extent of permanent impairment and limitations and any need for continuing and/or future medical care resulting from the injury. The information may be submitted on the “Primary Treating Physician's Permanent and Stationary Report” form (DWC Form PR-3 or DWC Form PR-4) contained in section 9785.3 or section 9785.4, or in such other manner which provides all the information required by Title 8, California Code of Regulations, section 10606. For permanent disability evaluation performed pursuant to the permanent disability evaluation schedule adopted on or after January 1, 2005, the primary treating physician's reports concerning the existence and

extent of permanent impairment shall describe the impairment in accordance with the AMA Guides to the Evaluation on Permanent Impairment, 5th Edition (DWC Form PR-4). Qualified Medical Evaluators and Agreed Medical Evaluators may not use DWC Form PR-3 or DWC Form PR-4 to report medical-legal evaluations.

(i) If the employee is receiving medical treatment for more than one condition, the primary treating physician, upon finding that the employee is permanent and stationary as to all conditions, and that the injury has resulted in permanent partial disability, shall complete the “Physician’s Report on Permanent and Stationary Status and Work Capacity Evaluation” (DWC-AD 10133.36) and attach the form to the report required under subdivision (h).

~~(h)~~ (j) Any controversies concerning this section shall be resolved pursuant to Labor Code Section 4603 or 4604, whichever is appropriate.

~~(i)~~ (k) Claims administrators shall reimburse primary treating physicians for their reports submitted pursuant to this section as required by the Official Medical Fee Schedule.

Authority cited: Sections 133, 4603.5 and 5307.3, Labor Code.

Reference: Sections 4061, 4061.5, 4062, 4600, 4600.3, 4603.2, 4604.5, 4610.5, 4636, 4658.7, 4660, 4662, 4663 and 4664, Labor Code.