

Informal Draft Fiscal Year 2016 Research Agenda
Workers' Compensation Research and Evaluation Group
Texas Department of Insurance

Labor Code §405.0026 requires the commissioner of insurance to adopt an annual research agenda for the Workers' Compensation Research and Evaluation Group (REG) at the Texas Department of Insurance. To accomplish this, TDI must publish a proposed research agenda in the *Texas Register* for public review and comment. The commissioner will hold a public hearing on the proposed research agenda, following formal publication of the proposal, on request.

Each year, the REG requests research agenda suggestions from legislative offices, stakeholders, and the general public. The REG uses the following criteria to evaluate the responses:

- Is the proposed research project required by statute or likely to be part of an upcoming legislative review?
- Will the results of the proposed research project address the information needs of multiple stakeholder groups or legislative committees?
- Is there available data to complete the project or can data be obtained easily and economically to complete the project?
- Does the REG have sufficient resources to complete the project within FY 2016?

The REG plans to propose the following projects for the FY 2016 Research Agenda:

1. Completion and publication of the tenth edition of the Workers' Compensation Health Care Network Report Card (required under Insurance Code §1305.502(a)-(d) and Labor Code §405.0025(b)).
2. An update of the 2014 *Setting the Standard* biennial report on the impact of the HB 7 (2005) legislative reforms of the Texas workers' compensation system. The

report presents results on the affordability and availability of workers' compensation insurance for Texas employers and the impact of certified workers' compensation health care networks on return-to-work outcomes, medical costs, quality-of-care issues, and medical dispute resolution (required by Insurance Code §2053.012 and Labor Code §405.0025(a)-(c)).

3. An update of the 2014 biennial study to estimate employer participation in the Texas workers' compensation system (required by Insurance Code §2053.012(a) and Labor Code §405.0025(a)(6)).
4. An analysis of designated doctor examinations in the Texas workers' compensation system.
5. An annual update of medical costs and utilization in the Texas workers' compensation system, with additional attention on the cost and utilization of office visits and physical medicine services.
6. An updated analysis of the impact of the pharmacy closed formulary on the utilization and cost patterns in pharmacy prescriptions for new and legacy claims, with special focus on the preliminary impact of federal reclassification of hydrocodone-combination drugs, as well as post-formulary trends in the utilization of physical medicine in the Texas workers' compensation system.

The REG will consider expanding the scope of the listed projects or conducting additional projects to accommodate stakeholder suggestions, subject to resource and data availability.

We invite stakeholders to send questions or suggestions for the research agenda to D.C. Campbell (WCResearch@tdi.texas.gov) by October 26, 2015.