

No. **2023-8121**

**Official Order
of the
Texas Commissioner of Workers' Compensation**

Date: 08/07/2023

Subject Considered:

Hartford Casualty Insurance Company
One Hartford Plaza
Hartford, Connecticut 06155

Consent Order
DWC Enforcement File No. 32135

General remarks and official action taken:

This is a consent order with Hartford Casualty Insurance Company (Respondent). The commissioner of the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) considers whether DWC should take disciplinary action against Respondent.

Waiver

Respondent acknowledges that the Texas Labor Code and other applicable laws provide certain rights. Respondent waives all of these rights, and any other procedural rights that apply, in consideration of the entry of this consent order.

Findings of Fact

1. Respondent holds a certificate of authority issued by the Texas Department of Insurance to transact the business of insurance pursuant to Tex. Ins. Code §§ 801.051-801.053, and is licensed to write workers' compensation/employers' liability insurance in Texas.
2. Respondent was classified as "poor" tier in the 2007 Performance Based Oversight (PBO) assessments. Respondent was classified as "average" tier in the 2009, 2014, 2016, 2020, and 2022 PBO assessments. Respondent was classified as "high" tier in 2010, 2012, and 2018 PBO assessments.

Failure to Timely Act on a Medical Bill

3. On [REDACTED] a designated doctor (DD) provided medical services to an injured employee. On [REDACTED] Respondent received a completed medical bill for [REDACTED] from the DD.
4. Respondent was required to act on the bill within 45 days of receiving it. The deadline to act was [REDACTED]
5. On [REDACTED] Respondent paid [REDACTED] to the DD, which was 72 days late.

Assessment of Sanction

1. Failure to pay health benefits in a timely and cost-effective manner is harmful to injured employees and the Texas workers' compensation system. Prompt payment of medical bills is imperative to DWC's goal of ensuring that injured employees have access to prompt, high-quality medical care.
2. In assessing the sanction for this case, DWC fully considered the following factors in Tex. Lab. Code § 415.021(c) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 180.26(e):
 - the seriousness of the violation, including the nature, circumstances, consequences, extent, and gravity of the prohibited act;
 - the history and extent of previous administrative violations;
 - the violator's demonstration of good faith, including actions it took to rectify the consequences of the prohibited act;
 - the penalty necessary to deter future violations;
 - whether the administrative violation had a negative impact on the delivery of benefits to an injured employee;
 - the history of compliance with electronic data interchange requirements;
 - to the extent reasonable, the economic benefit resulting from the prohibited act; and
 - other matters that justice may require, including, but not limited to:
 - PBO assessments;
 - prompt and earnest actions to prevent future violations;
 - self-report of the violation;
 - the size of the company or practice;
 - the effect of a sanction on the availability of health care; and

- evidence of heightened awareness of the legal duty to comply with the Texas Workers' Compensation Act and DWC rules.
- 3. DWC found the following factors in Tex. Lab. Code § 415.021(c) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 180.26(e) to be aggravating: the seriousness of the violation, including the nature, circumstances, consequences, extent, and gravity of the prohibited act; and to the extent reasonable, the economic benefit resulting from the prohibited act. Further, the late medical bill payment was more than 60 days late and involved DD services, which do not require preauthorization and are essential to the Texas workers' compensation system.
- 4. DWC considers the following factors mitigating, pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code § 415.021(c) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 180.26(e): Respondent's demonstration of good faith, including actions it took to rectify the consequences of the prohibited act. Specifically, a change in TPA resulted in the Respondent not receiving the original bill. When Respondent was notified of the error, Respondent contacted the DD, and paid the bill within 30 days.
- 5. Respondent acknowledges communicating with DWC about the relevant statute and rule violations alleged; that the facts establish that the administrative violation(s) occurred; and that the proposed sanction is appropriate, including the factors DWC considered under Tex. Lab. Code § 415.021(c) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 180.26(e).
- 6. Respondent acknowledges that, in assessing the sanction, DWC considered the factors in Tex. Lab. Code § 415.021(c) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 180.26(e).

Conclusions of Law

- 1. The commissioner has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code §§ 402.001, 402.00114, 402.00116, 402.00128, 414.002, and 414.003.
- 2. The commissioner has the authority to dispose of this case informally pursuant to Tex. Gov't Code § 2001.056, Tex. Lab. Code §§ 401.021 and 402.00128(b)(6)-(7), and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 180.26(h) and (i).
- 3. Respondent has knowingly and voluntarily waived all procedural rights to which it may have been entitled regarding the entry of this order, including, but not limited to, issuance and service of notice of intent to institute disciplinary action, notice of

hearing, a public hearing, a proposal for decision, a rehearing by the commissioner, and judicial review.

4. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code § 415.021, the commissioner may assess an administrative penalty against a person who commits an administrative violation.
5. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code § 415.002(a)(20) and (22), an insurance carrier or its representative commits an administrative violation each time it violates a DWC rule or a provision of the Texas Workers' Compensation Act.

Failure to Timely Act on a Medical Bill

6. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code § 408.027 and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 133.240, an insurance carrier is required to timely process and take final action on a completed medical bill within 45 days of receiving the bill.
7. Respondent violated Tex. Lab. Code §§ 408.027; 415.002(a)(20) and (22); and 28 Tex. Admin Code § 133.240 each time Respondent failed to pay, reduce, deny, or determine to audit a completed medical bill within 45 days of receiving the bill.

Order

It is ordered that Hartford Casualty Insurance Company must pay an administrative penalty of \$1,500 within 30 days from the date of this order. Hartford Casualty Insurance Company must pay the administrative penalty by electronic transfer using the State Invoice Payment Service, company check, cashier's check, or money order and make it payable to the "State of Texas." Mail the administrative penalty to the Texas Department of Insurance, Attn: DWC Enforcement Section, MC AO-9999, P.O. Box 12030, Austin, Texas 78711-2030.



Jeff Nelson
Commissioner
TDI, Division of Workers' Compensation

Approved Form and Content:



Kathleen Kern
Staff Attorney, Enforcement
Compliance and Investigations
TDI, Division of Workers' Compensation

Unsworn Declaration

STATE OF CALIFORNIA §
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO §
§

Pursuant to the Tex. Civ. Prac. and Rem. Code § 132.001(a), (b), and (d), my name is Julie Riddle. I hold the position of Assistant Director, Claim Compliance and am the authorized representative of Hartford Casualty Insurance Company. My business address is:
4245 Meridian Ave., Suite 200, Aurora, DuPage, IL, 60504.
(Street) (City) (County) (State) (ZIP Code)

I am executing this declaration as part of my assigned duties and responsibilities. I declare under penalty of perjury that the facts stated in this document are true and correct.

Julie Riddle
Declarant

Executed on July 18, 2023.