No. 2023-7893

# Official Order of the Texas Commissioner of Workers' Compensation

Date: 4/14/2023

## **Subject Considered:**

Indemnity Insurance Company of North America 115 Wild Basin Road, Suite 207 West Lake Hills, Texas 78746

Consent Order

DWC Enforcement File Nos. 27591, 28113, 30524, 30533, 30680, 30687, 30742, 30747, 30749, 30850, 30851, 30917, 30956, 31007, and 31016

#### **General remarks and official action taken:**

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

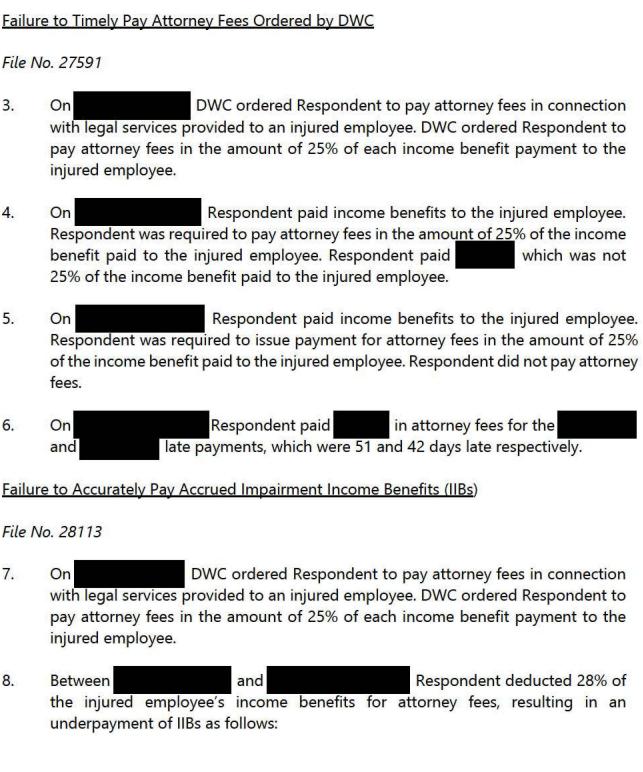
#### Waiver

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 "average" tier in the 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, and 2022 Performance Based Oversight (PBO) assessments.

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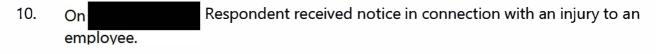
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	Benefit Period	Amount Deducted		- 1	l I		Underpayment A <u>moun</u> t		
a.									
b.									
c.									
d.									
e.									
f.									
g.									
					TOT	ΑL			

9. On Respondent completed paying the underpaid IIBs.

<u>Failure to Timely Initiate Temporary Income Benefits (TIBs) and Failure to Timely Pay</u>
<u>Accrued TIBs</u>

File No. 30524



- 11. The first day of disability for the injured employee began on the-eighth day of disability accrued on
- 12. Respondent was required to initiate or dispute TIBs the later of 15 days after it received written notice of the injury or seven days after the accrual date. In this case, the later date was on
- 13. Respondent initiated TIBs on payment of for the for the form of the form o
- 14. The injured employee was released for full work duty from through



Indemn D <b>W</b> C Er	ssioner's Order hity Insurance Company of North America nforcement File Nos. 27591, 28113, 30524, 30533, 30680, 30687, 30742, 30747, 30749, 30850, 30917, 30956, 31007, and 31016 of 21
16.	Respondent was required to pay TIBs to the injured employee from through The TIBs payment was due seven days after the first day of the pay period. In this case, the latest date to pay accrued TIBs was
17.	On Respondent paid in accrued TIBs six days late.
File No	o. 30680
18.	On Respondent received an injured employee's first notice of injury.
19.	The injured employee's first day of disability began on eighth day of disability accrued on .
20.	Respondent was required to initiate or dispute TIBs the later of 15 days after receiving written notice of the injury or seven days after the accrual date. In this case, the later date was on
21.	Respondent initiated TIBs payments in the amount of which was 29 days late.
22.	Respondent was required to pay TIBs to the injured employee from through The TIBs payments were due seven days after the first day of the pay period. Respondent failed to timely pay in TIBs, as follows:

	Payment Period	Date Due	Date Paid	Days Late
a				
b.				
c.				
d.				

File No. 31007

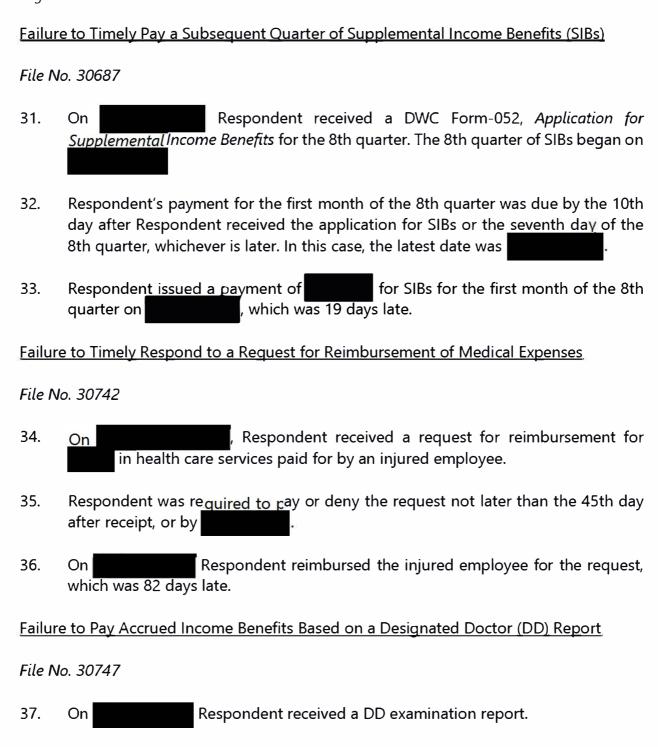
23.	On		Respondent	received	an injured	l employee'	s first i	notice	of injury	•
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24. The injured employee's first day of disability began on day of disability accrued on

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25.	Respondent was required to initiate or dispute TIBs the later of 15 days after it received written notice of the injury or seven days after the accrual date. In this case, the later date was on					
26.	Respondent initiated TIBs payments in the amount of , which was 49 days late.					
27. Respondent was required to pay TIBs to the injured employee from through through. The TIBs payments were due seven days after the day of the pay period. Respondent failed to timely pay in TIBs, as follows:						
	Payment Period	Date Due	Date Paid	Days Late		
	a.					
	b.					
	c.					
	d.					
	e to Timely Respond to a Request for Re	imbursement c	of Pharmaceutic	al Expenses		
28.	On Respondent rece in pharmaceutical expenses for services		or reimburseme	ent of		
29.	Respondent was required to respond b	y the 45th day	from receipt of	the request,		
30.	Respondent reimbursed the injured em 82 days late.	ployee	on	, which was		

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The DD determined that the injured employee reached maximum medical

38.

improvement (MMI) on

Confidential Information Redacted Texas Labor Code §§402.083 and 402.092

with an impairment rating (IR) of

Comm	nissioner's Order
Indem DWC E	nity Insurance Company of North America Enforcement File Nos. 27591, 28113, 30524, 30533, 30680, 30687, 30742, 30747, 30749, 30850, , 30917, 30956, 31007, and 31016
39.	Respondent was required to pay accrued IIBs no later than five days after receiving the DD report. The deadline to pay benefits was
40.	Respondent paid in IIBs on , which was nine days late.
File ∧	Io. 30956
41.	On Respondent received a DD examination report.
42.	The DD determined that the injured employee reached MMI on with a IR.
43.	Respondent was required to pay accrued IIBs no later than five days after receiving the DD report. The deadline to pay benefits was May 17, 2022.
44.	Respondent paid in IIBs on , which was 38 days late.
<u>Failur</u>	e to Timely Initiate Payment of TIBs
File N	Io. 30749
45.	On Respondent received an injured employee's first notice of injury.
46.	The injured employee's first day of <u>disability began</u> on eighth day of disability accrued on .
47.	Respondent was required to initiate or dispute TIBs the later of 15 days after it received written notice of the injury or seven days after the accrual date. In this case, the later date was on
48.	Respondent initiated in TIBs on , which was 10 days late.
File ∧	Io. 30851
49.	On Respondent received an injured employee's first notice of

injury.

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. 490 0				
50.	The injured employee's first day of eighth day of disability accrued on	disability began	on	, and the
51.	Respondent was required to initiate received written notice of the injury case, the later date was on	•		-
52.	Respondent filed a dispute with DWG	Con	which was 49	days late.
53.	Due to the untimely dispute, Respondate of disability to the date of dispute in TIBs 204 days late.			from the first condent paid
<u>Failur</u>	e to Timely Pay Accrued IIBs			
File N	o. 30850			
54.	Respondent was required to pay I between through days after the first day of the pay pe in IIBs, as follows:	. The IIBs	s payments we	re due <u>seven</u>
	Payment Period	Date Due	Date Paid	Days_Late
	<u>a.</u>		_	
	<u>b.</u>		_	
	<u>d.</u>			
	e to Timely Initiate TIBs, Failure to Timed ed Income Benefits Based on a DD Re	•	TBs, and Failure	to Pay

File No. 30917

Respondent received an injured employee's first notice of 55. injury, which occurred on

and the

Commissioner's Order Indemnity Insurance Company of North America DWC Enforcement File Nos. 27591, 28113, 30524, 30533, 30680, 30687, 30742, 30747, 30749, 30850, 30851, 30917, 30956, 31007, and 31016 Page 9 of 21 The injured employee's first day of disability began on 56. eighth day of disability accrued on 57. Respondent was required to initiate or dispute TIBs the later of 15 days after it received written notice of the injury or seven days after the accrual date. In this case, the later date was on 58. Respondent initiated TIBs when it made a partial TIBs On payment of 59. On

Respondent made another partial TIBs payment in the toward the initial TIBs payment, which was 20 days late. amount of

60. Respondent paid the remaining of the initial TIBs On payment, which was 62 days late.

On Respondent paid in interest for the late TIBs payment eight 61. days late.

62. Respondent was required to pay TIBs to the injured employee from through The TIBs payments were due seven days after the first day of the pay period. Respondent failed to timely pay in TIBs, as follows:

	Payment Period	Date Due	Date Paid	Days Late
a.				
b.				
c.				
d.				
e.				
f.				
g.				
h.				
i.				
j.				
k.				

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- 63. On Respondent suspended TIBs based on a report from the injured employee's treating doctor stating the injured employee reached MMI with an IR of
- 64. On Respondent received a DD report which stated the injured employee had not reached MMI and was expected to reach MMI on or about
- 65. Respondent did not resume payment of TIBs in accordance with the DD report.
- 66. On Respondent sent a PLN-11, Notice of Disputed Issue(s) and Refusal to Pay Benefits disputing that the work-related injury prevented the injured employee from getting or keeping a job that pays what the injured employee earned pre-injury.
- 67. Respondent was required to pay TIBs to the injured employee from through The TIBs payments were due seven days after the first day of the pay period. Respondent failed to timely pay in TIBs, as follows:

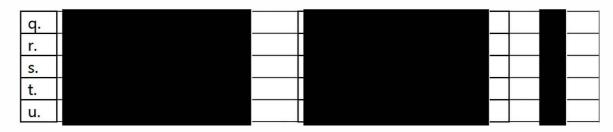
	Payment Period	Date Due	Date Paid	Days La	ate
a.					
b.					
c.					
d.					
e.					
f.					
g.					
h.					
i.					
j.					
k.					
I.			_		
m.					
n.					
0.					
p.					

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68. On Respondent paid interest 9 days late.

#### Failure to Timely Act on a Request for Reconsideration

File No. 31016

- 69. On Respondent received a complete request for reconsideration of a medical hill from a health care provider for medical services rendered to the injured employee on .
- 70. Respondent was required to act on the request for reconsideration not later than the 30th day of receipt of the request, or by
- 71. Respondent acted on the medical bill by paying on which was 39 days late.
- 72. On Respondent paid in interest, which was six days late.

#### **Assessment of Sanction**

- 1. Failure to timely pay attorney fees ordered by DWC hinders the division's goal of providing a fair and accessible dispute resolution process and is harmful to the Texas workers' compensation system.
- 2. Failure to provide income benefits and interest in a timely and cost-effective manner is harmful to injured employees and the Texas workers' compensation system.
- 3. Prompt reimbursement of medical bills is imperative to DWC's goal of ensuring that injured employees have access to prompt, high-quality medical care.

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- 4. 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;
    - o prompt and earnest actions to prevent future violations;
    - o self-report of the violation;
    - o the size of the company or practice;
    - o 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.
- 5. 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; the history and extent of previous administrative violations; the penalty necessary to deter future violations; whether the administrative violation had a negative impact on the delivery of benefits to an injured employee; to the extent reasonable, the economic benefit resulting from the prohibited act; and other matters that justice may require, including, but not limited to the size of the company or practice and evidence of heightened awareness of the legal duty to comply with the Texas Workers' Compensation Act and DWC rules.
- 6. DWC is aware of no mitigating factors pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code § 415.021(c) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 180.26(e).

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- 7. 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).
- 8. 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), an insurance carrier or its representative commits an administrative violation each time it violates a DWC rule.
- 6. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code § 415.002(a)(22), an insurance carrier or its representative commits an administrative violation each time it fails to comply with a provision of the Texas Workers' Compensation Act.

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## Failure to Timely Pay Attorney Fees Ordered by DWC

File No. 27591

- 7. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code §§ 415.021(a) and 415.0035(e), an insurance carrier commits an administrative violation if it violates, fails to comply with, or refuses to comply with a DWC order.
- 8. Pursuant to 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 152.1(c), insurance carriers are required to pay attorney fees ordered by DWC. The insurance carrier must begin payment out of the approved income benefits by mailing a check to the attorney within seven days after receiving the order. As the insurance carrier pays income benefits, it must pay attorney fees until the fees are completely paid or income benefits cease.
- 9. Respondent violated Tex. Lab. Code §§ 415.002(a)(20) and (22), 415.021(a), and 415.0035(e) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 152.1(c) by failing to timely comply with a DWC order to pay attorney fees.

Failure to Timely Respond to a Request for Reimbursement of Pharmaceutical Expenses

File No. 30533

- 10. Pursuant to 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 134.504, an insurance carrier shall make appropriate payment to the injured employee or notify the injured employee of a reduction or denial of the payment within 45 days of receipt of the request for reimbursement for prescription drugs or over-the-counter alternatives to prescription drugs prescribed from the injured employee.
- 11. Respondent violated Tex. Lab. Code § 415.002(a)(20) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 134.504 by failing to timely act on a request for reimbursement of pharmaceutical expenses.

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## <u>Failure to Timely Respond to a Request for Reimbursement of Medical Expenses</u>

File No. 30742

- 12. Pursuant to 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 133.270, an insurance carrier shall pay or deny the injured employee's request for reimbursement within 45 days of receipt.
- 13. Respondent violated Tex. Lab. Code § 415.002(a)(20) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code 133.270(c) by failing to respond to a request for reimbursement for out-of-pocket medical expenses within 45 days of receipt.

#### Failure to Timely Initiate Payment of TIBs

File Nos. 30524, 30680, 30749, 30851, 30917, and 31007

- 14. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code § 409.021(e) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 124.3, an insurance carrier or its representative commits an administrative violation by failing to pay benefits, file a Notice of Denial on the compensability of a claim, or file a Notice of Continuing Investigation within 15 days after receiving written notice of the injury.
- 15. Respondent violated Tex. Lab. Code §§ 409.021 and 415.002(a)(20) and (22) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 124.3 each time Respondent failed to timely initiate TIBs.

#### Failure to Timely Pay Accrued TIBs

File Nos. 30524, 30680, 30917, and 31007

- 16. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code §§ 408.081, 409.023, and 415.002(a)(16), an insurance carrier must pay benefits weekly, as and when the benefits accrue, without order from the commissioner.
- 17. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code §§ 408.081, 408.082, and 409.021 and 28 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 124.3 and 124.7, an insurance carrier is required to initiate payment of TIBs no later than the 15th day after it receives written notice of the injury or the seventh day after the accrual date, unless the insurance carrier notifies DWC and the injured employee in writing of its refusal to pay.

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18. Respondent violated Tex. Lab. Code §§ 409.021 and 415.002(a)(16), (20), and (22) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code §§ 124.3 and 124.7 each time Respondent failed to timely pay accrued TIBs.

## Failure to Accurately Pay IIBs

File No. 28113

- 19. Tex. Lab. Code § 408.081(a) an injured employee is entitled to timely and accurate income benefits.
- 20. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code § 408.126, IIBs are equal to 70% of the injured employee's average weekly wage.
- 21. Respondent violated Tex. Lab. Code §§ 408.081(a) and 415.002(a)(22) each time Respondent failed to accurately pay IIBs.

#### Failure to Timely Pay Accrued IIBs

File No. 30850

- 22. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code §§ 408.081, 409.023, and 415.002(a)(16), an insurance carrier must pay benefits weekly, as and when the benefits accrue, without order from the commissioner.
- 23. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code § 408.121(b) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 130.8, an employee's entitlement to IIBs begins the day after the employee reaches MMI and, when the date of MMI is not disputed, the carrier shall initiate payment of IIBs on or before the fifth day after the date of receipt of the employee's treating doctor's medical evaluation report.
- 24. Respondent violated Tex. Lab. Code §§ 409.023; 415.002(a)(16), (20) and (22); and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 130.8 each time it failed to pay accrued IIBs.

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## Failure to Pay Accrued Income Benefits Based on a DD Report

File Nos. 30747, 30917, and 30956

- 25. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code §§ 408.081, 409.023, and 415.002(a)(16), an insurance carrier must pay benefits weekly, as and when the benefits accrue, without order from the commissioner.
- 26. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code § 408.0041(f), an insurance carrier must pay benefits based on the opinion of the DD during any pending dispute.
- 27. Pursuant to 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 127.10(h), an insurance carrier must pay all benefits in accordance with the DD report for the issues in dispute no later than five days after receiving the report.
- 28. Respondent violated Tex. Lab. Code §§ 409.023 and 415.002(a)(16), (20), and (22); and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 127.10(h) by failing to timely pay accrued income benefits in accordance with the DD report no later than five days after receiving the report.

### Failure to Timely Pay a Subsequent Quarter of SIBs

File No. 30687

- 29. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code § 408.144, SIBs are calculated quarterly and paid monthly.
- 30. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code § 408.145, an insurance carrier must pay SIBs no later than the seventh day after the employee's impairment income benefit period expires and must continue to pay the benefits in a timely manner.
- 31. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code § 409.023, an insurance carrier must continue to pay benefits promptly as and when benefits accrue without a final decision, order, or other action from the commissioner, except as otherwise provided.
- 32. Pursuant to 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 130.107, an insurance carrier must make the first payment of SIBs for a subsequent quarter by the 10th day after receiving the

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application for supplemental income benefits or the seventh day of the quarter. An insurance carrier must make the second payment by the 37th day of the quarter and the third payment by the 67th day of the quarter.

33. Respondent violated Tex. Lab. Code §§ 408.144, 408.145, 409.023, 415.002(a)(20) and (22) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 130.107 when it failed to timely pay a subsequent quarter of SIBs.

## Failure to Timely Act on a Request for Reconsideration

File No. 31016

- 34. Pursuant to 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 133.250(g), an insurance carrier shall take final action after receipt of a request for reconsideration of a medical bill not later than the 30th day after the date the insurance carrier received the request.
- 35. Respondent violated Tex. Lab. Code § 415.002(a)(20) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 133.250(g) each time Respondent failed to timely act on a request for reconsideration of a medical bill.

## Failure to Timely Pay Interest for Indemnity Benefits

File No. 30917

- 36. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code § 408.064 and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 126.12(b), accrued but unpaid income benefits and interest shall be paid in a lump sum.
- 37. Respondent violated Tex. Lab. Code § 415.002(a)(20) and (22) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 126.12(b) each time Respondent failed to timely pay interest with accrued but unpaid income benefits.

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## Failure to Timely Act on a Request for Reconsideration

File No. 31016

- 38. Pursuant to 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 133.250(g), an insurance carrier shall take final action after receipt of a request for reconsideration of a medical bill not later than the 30th day after the date the insurance carrier received the request.
- 39. Respondent violated Tex. Lab. Code § 415.002(a)(20) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 133.250(g) when Respondent failed to act on the request for consideration within 30 days of receipt of the request.

## Failure to Timely Pay Interest for Medical Benefits

File No. 31016

- 40. Pursuant to Tex. Lab. Code § 413.019(a) and 28 Tex. Admin. Code § 134.130(a), an insurance carrier must pay interest on medical bills paid on or after the 60th day after the insurance carrier originally received the complete medical bill.
- 41. Respondent violated Tex. Lab. Code § 415.002(a)(20) and (22) each time Respondent failed to pay interest on medical bills paid on or after the 60th day after the insurance carrier originally received the complete medical bill.

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#### Order

It is ordered that Indemnity Insurance Company of North America must pay an administrative penalty of \$80,300 within 30 days from the date of this order. Indemnity Insurance Company of North America must pay the administrative penalty by 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, PO Box 12030, Austin, Texas 78711-2030.

Jeff Nelson Commissioner

TDI, Division of Workers' Compensation

Approved Form and Content:

Tyrus Housh

Staff Attorney, Enforcement Compliance and Investigations

TDI, Division of Workers' Compensation

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# **Unsworn Declaration**

STATE OF _Delaware	§		
	§		
COUNTY OF New Castle	§		
Pursuant to the Tex. Civ. P  Daniel S. Hawthorne .			• • •
authorized representative			
business address is:	•	, -	·
1 Beaver Valley Road	, Wilmington	_,New Castle, DE	
(Street)		(County) (State	
I am executing this declaration under penalty of perjury that		9	·
Daniel S. Hawthorn	re_		
Declarant			
Executed on March :	<del>29</del> , 2023.		