

- **Are rehabilitation services included as part of my medical treatment?**

Yes, they are. Services may include medical, vocational, re-employment, and/or treatment by spiritual means to restore a work-injured employee as near as possible to his/her pre-injury status. Medical restorative services may include but are not limited to medical, surgical, hospital nursing services, attendant care, chiropractic care, physical therapy, occupational therapy, medicines and psychological services, prosthesis and orthosis.

- **What is the Donley Rehab. Center?**

The Dr. John E. Donley Center was created by the RI Legislature. The Rehabilitation Unit at the Donley Center provides comprehensive physical therapy, aquatic therapy, work hardening and ergonomic site visits prior to the injured worker returning to his/her job. This unit also provides case management. Phone: (401) 243-1200.

- **What is the Medical Advisory Board?**

The Workers' Compensation Court appoints an 11 member Medical Advisory Board to address medical disputes and charges of improper or unethical conduct by medical care providers. The Board establishes medical protocols, standard injury treatments, and addresses medical costs and length of employee disability. Phone: (401) 458-3560.



For more information about this or other workers' compensation topics, please call the...

**RI Workers' Compensation Education Unit**  
**(401) 462-8100—press #1**  
**www.dlt.ri.gov/wc**  
Monday through Friday  
8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
TDD: (401) 462-8006

Equal opportunity employer/program.  
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities

## Rhode Island Workers' Compensation Benefits

### Medical Services and Treatment

RI Department of Labor and Training



EDUCATION UNIT

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This brochure is not intended to be a full and complete description of the law and is not a substitute for legal advice. For further information, call the Education Unit at: (401) 462-8100 - press #1

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The RI workers' compensation system is a form of no-fault insurance designed to provide assistance to injured employees for medical expenses and lost wages. It applies to businesses with one or more employees, unless otherwise exempt by law.

### Medical Services and Treatment

**Section 28-33-8** of the RI Workers' Compensation Act deals with medical treatment and examinations following a work-related injury or illness. This brochure answers commonly asked questions about this section of the law.

- **What are my responsibilities if I have a work-related injury or illness?**

You must report the injury or illness to your employer immediately or as soon as you are aware that your injury or illness may be work related. You should also get immediate medical care.

- **Can I go to my own doctor?**

You may choose your first medical care provider. Following a reported injury, your employer may offer (and you may accept) treatment at an emergency room or by a doctor suggested by your employer. This may allow you to be treated quickly without waiting to be examined elsewhere. You will still have the right to see a doctor of your choice, initially.

- **What happens if I go to an emergency room following an injury?**

If you first go to an emergency room or see a company doctor (a doctor under contract with your employer or his/her insurance company), this visit will **not** count as your first choice. You are then still free to choose another doctor. However, should you return to that facility or doctor for further treatment, that may become your choice.

- **What if I wanted to change doctors?**

Once you choose your first doctor for treatment, if you decide later to switch to another doctor, you may have to get approval first. If your employer or his/her insurer has an approved Preferred Provider Network (PPN) list on file with the Medical Advisory Board, you must choose your next medical care provider from this list. Your employer is required to either give you the PPN list or tell you where the list is available for you to see.

If your choice of doctor is not listed in the network, you must get approval from either the insurer involved or your employer if he/she is self-insured. You must get this approval before seeking treatment from that doctor. If you do not, you may have to pay the bill. (However, if you need the services of a specialty not listed in the PPN, you are then free to choose that medical care provider.)

- **Can my doctor refer me to another doctor?**

Your initial doctor may refer you to any

qualified specialist for consultation, assessment, or specific treatment, without prior approval. If an injured employee is treating with an out-of-state medical service provider, the RI Workers' Compensation Court considers that medical service provider to be bound by the provisions of the RI Workers' Compensation Act.

- **Who is considered a physician?**

Under the law, a "physician" means a medical doctor, surgeon, dentist, chiropractor, licensed psychologist, osteopath, podiatrist, and optometrist. When we use the term "doctor" we also mean any of these professionals.

- **What if I need surgery?**

Major surgery will not be paid for unless your physician gets permission from your employer or the insurer. If denied, permission must be given by the Workers' Compensation Court.

- **Will I have to undergo examinations by the insurance company's doctor?**

If requested by the insurance company, or by your employer if he/she is self-insured, you may be scheduled for an examination by a doctor provided and paid for by the insurance company or your employer. You will be sent a full, exact signed copy of the report. The insurer may request that you have these exams at reasonable times during your disability. If the insurer or your employer requests the exam, then they shall pay or reimburse you for reasonable travel costs.