

CASE CONFERENCE FACT SHEET

About The Medical Panels Office

The Medical Panels Office is a neutral and impartial agency that takes a collaborative, fact-based and focused approach to resolving differences of medical opinion and helping injured workers have more involvement in this aspect of their workers' compensation claim. The Medical Panels Office is independent from the Workers' Compensation Board.

The role of the Medical Panels Office is unique in Canada as most jurisdictions provide this service through their respective WCB Offices.

How to Contact Us:

Reception: 825-468-4251

Toll Free: 877-787-0622

Fax: 780-424-6352

Email: mpo@gov.ab.ca

WHAT IS A CASE CONFERENCE

In an effort to ensure that an Injured Worker's concerns are fully heard, the June 2017 review of the Workers Compensation Board system in Alberta recommended that an informal dispute resolution process be established to facilitate resolution of medical matters prior to holding a Medical Panel. This is in accordance with section 46.4 of the *Workers' Compensation Act*.

These informal discussions, called Case Conferences, are now being held on a pilot basis by the Medical Panels Commissioner (MPC), when the Injured Worker agrees to participate. Any statements made during the conference are heard or taken without prejudice (meaning avoiding potential harm to the existing rights of the Injured Worker).

Who participates in a Case Conference?

- The Injured Worker and up to 3 representatives (e.g. a family member, treating physician, appeals advisor).
- An independent facilitator who will guide the process and the discussion.
- In addition to the Chair from the Medical Panels Office (MPO), participants may include:
 - a senior experienced clinician.
 - an allied health professional, psychiatrist or psychologist.
 - any of the physicians who have provided a medical opinions.

A Case Conference normally takes 2-3 hours and is held in the Medical Panels Office in Edmonton.

What may be discussed during a Case Conference?

- Medical questions or issues being raised with the MPO.
- Injured Worker's input and questions about the medical issues to be addressed.
- Medical information provided to the MPO: Has anything been missed? Is there any new evidence?
- Injured Worker's interests and ultimate goal with respect to their claim.

A summary of the Injured Worker's medical file, as prepared by the Workers' Compensation Board of Alberta, is provided to the worker in advance, which they may wish to share with their advocates.

Possible Case Conference outcomes:

- The Injured Worker feels heard.
- Agreement on the way to resolve the medical issue or questions.
- Clarification of a medical matter or issue.
- New medical evidence shared at the Case Conference is forwarded to the WCB.
- Confirmation that information on the medical file is complete and no pertinent information is missing.
- Injured Worker feels prepared for a Medical Panel.

The facilitator will write a brief summary of the report and provide it to participants for review.