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[Illinois Workers' Compensation Reform, The Quinn Proposal](#)

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Governor Quinn has released details concerning his proposals to “reform” workers’ compensation in Illinois. Business in Illinois has taken full advantage of the severe recession and is pressing for a dramatic reduction of all benefits. The origin of workers’ compensation is with an agreement between labor and management to forego trial by jury in exchange for a no fault system of benefits with limited recovery. Governor Quinn is attempting to appease business interests but continue to protect the injured worker. However, workers who are injured need to understand that “reform” means a reduction of benefits. Governor Quinn supports the following reforms to “aid employers” : A limitation of 20 weeks for temporary total disability benefits when you suffer from Carpal Tunnel syndrome, denial of the claim when the worker is intoxicated, reducing the rate of compensation for permanent partial disability and temporary total disability to pre-2005 levels, enhanced authority to investigate and prosecute fraud, capping wage differentials at the age of 67 or 5 years post accident, whichever is later, increased use of utilization review for physical therapy, occupational therapy and chiropractic care and a reduction of 30% of the fee schedule payments to doctors, hospitals and other medical providers. Other procedural changes are suggested such as forcing insurers to accept electronic billing, requiring prompt payment of medical bills by requiring the imposition of interest and/or penalties for failure to pay promptly, a restructuring of the operation of the Illinois Workers’ Compensation Commission (the administrative body that is charged with the responsibility of approving/denying claims filed).

At this point, the office of the Governor is asking the legislature to act on these suggestions by April 15th, 2011. So, something is going to happen and it will happen soon! Make sure your voice is heard. Contact your State Senator or Legislator and let them know how you feel about these proposed changes. The business lobby is unhappy, believing the changes “do not go far enough” meaning the business lobby wants deeper benefit cuts. We remain in favor of the ‘agreed bill’ process. Labor can hold its own at the bargaining table. That is how the system is designed to work.

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