



## Ending the Inappropriate Use of Narcotics in Workers' Compensation

March 15, 2011

1:00 – 4:00 pm

Alarming reports of the inappropriate use of narcotics in workers' compensation have been surfacing in research papers, blogs, and conference agendas for the last several years. The latest research, including reports from the National Council of Compensation Insurance (NCCI) and California Workers' Compensation Institute (CWCI), indicates that abuse has continued unabated, and if anything is expanding into new ills such as the off label use of very potent end of life palliatives.

The inappropriate use of these powerful drugs creates many challenges in workers compensation, including poor return-to-work outcomes, addiction, and rising costs. Join claims and case managers, occupational health providers, and agency personnel to discuss how to curb this disturbing trend.

### Session Objectives:

- Hear the latest research on how narcotics are being inappropriately prescribed and where in North America it is a particular challenge.
- Gain a working level medial perspective on the appropriate and inappropriate use of narcotics in the treatment of occupational injuries.
- Identify "red flags" in cases involving inappropriate use of narcotics and hear effective strategies on how to respond.
- Discuss claims handling techniques and regulatory remedies to limit inappropriate use of narcotics.

### Audience:

- Claims adjusters and case managers
- Workers' compensation managers and human resource specialists
- Union members and employee representatives
- Occupational health providers
- Jurisdictional agency staff including medical directors, vocational rehabilitation managers, and dispute resolution staff

### Schedule:

1:00 – 1:45 pm

#### **Recent Trends in Narcotic Use**

*Alex Swedlow, California Workers' Compensation Institute*

Several prominent reports have shown that inappropriate narcotic use continues to be a significant problem in workers' compensation cases. The presentation will especially highlight how abuse differs jurisdictionally.

1:45 – 2:30 pm

**Appropriate Treatment Pathways for Pain**

*Dr. Heather Gjorgievski, Concentra*

An occupational clinician will discuss how physicians manage pain and why narcotics are not medically indicated in most occupational injury cases. Understand what medical impacts may result from inappropriate narcotic use.

2:30 – 3:15 pm

**The Impact of Narcotic Misuse on Return to Work**

*Dr. Thompson, EK Health\**

Learn what signs and red flags can be used by a case manager to identify opioid over use, abuse, and addiction. Understand how return to work is impacted by inappropriate narcotic use and what legal and regulatory remedies can be used to curb inappropriate use.

3:15 – 3:30 pm

*Refreshment Break*

3:30 – 4:00 pm

**Wrap-Up**

*Joseph Paduda\**

As inappropriate use of narcotics grows many have called for jurisdictions to take action. What regulatory changes can be implemented to protect injured workers from harm of narcotic abuse?

\*Invited speaker