

Official Disabilities Guidelines (ODG) FAQs

On July 1, 2013, the Work Loss Data Institute's (WLDI) Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) go into effect in New Mexico under Part 4 and 7 of the WCA Rules for the treatment of workers' compensation injuries. All medical services rendered for recommended treatment contained in the most recent edition of Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) are presumed reasonable and necessary.

**TITLE 11 LABOR AND WORKERS COMPENSATION
CHAPTER 4 WORKERS' COMPENSATION
PART 4 CLAIMS RESOLUTION
11.4.4.11:**

- G.** Responsibility for payment of HCP services:
- (1) The employer shall be responsible for all reasonable and necessary medical services provided by an authorized HCP from the date the notice of change is effective.
 - (2) The worker shall be responsible for any medical services rendered by an unauthorized HCP.
 - (3) The designation of an authorized HCP shall remain in effect until modified by agreement of the parties or by order of the judge.
 - (4) **Effective July 1, 2013, all medical services rendered pursuant to recommended treatment contained in the most recent edition of the official disability guidelines™ (ODG) is presumed reasonable and necessary; there is no presumption regarding any other treatment.**

**TITLE 11 LABOR AND WORKERS' COMPENSATION
CHAPTER 4 WORKERS' COMPENSATION
PART 7 PAYMENTS FOR HEALTH CARE SERVICES
11.4.7.8:**

- F.** Employers are responsible for timely good faith payment as defined in Subsection A of 11.4.7.11 NMAC for all reasonable and necessary health care services for work-related injuries and diseases. Effective July 1, 2013, all medical services rendered pursuant to recommended treatment contained in the most recent edition of the official disability guidelines™ (ODG) is presumed reasonable and necessary; there is no presumption regarding any other treatment.

What is *ODG*?*

ODG contains independent, evidence-based, nationally recognized treatment guidelines for the most common work-related conditions. *ODG* also includes evidence-based return-to-work guidelines as well as impairment guidelines from the International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions (IAIABC), making for a complete and defensible workers' comp reference. *ODG* is the most complete set of integrated evidence based medical treatment and return to work guidelines available.

What can I expect to find in *ODG*?*

Chapters, which are based on body parts such as "The Knee and Leg" or general conditions such as "Pain," begin with a summary of the most common diagnosis and complaints followed by recommended treatments. Information about recommended time out of work is also included in this section, where applicable. Following the chapter summary is a listing of the procedure codes for automated approval for each related ICD-9 diagnosis code. The most important part of each chapter is the "Procedure Summary" Section which contains a comprehensive list of treatments that could be performed for injuries to specific body parts or on general conditions as indicated by the chapter name. Each possible treatment procedure is listed as recommended, not recommended, or under study and all

recommendations are based on an comprehensive and ongoing review of peer reviewed scientific studies.

What is Work Loss Data Institute?*

Work Loss Data Institute (WLDI) is an independent database development company focused on workplace health and productivity. For more information on WLDI and its principles, [click here](#).

Can I review ODG before I purchase it?*

Yes. You have 30 days to review any ODG product. If you are not satisfied within 30 days of receipt, you may return the item(s) for a complete credit or refund. Call 1-800-488-5548 or [click here](#) to order now.

Does WLDI offer initial and ongoing training for its products?*

New: #1 recommendation for ODG training, a free self-paced Web based demo called *ODG: Good to Go!* -- Has all the benefits of a live demo, but also lets users spend more time on sections of interest, and skip features where training is not needed. To access this new tool, go to www.odg-disability.com/demo/ Other ODG training options are the following: (1) WLDI staff are happy to conduct webinars of *ODG* for you and your colleagues before or after your purchase of the product. In addition, our helpdesk is always open for general questions and guidance about the product. Call 1-800-488-5548 or e-mail odg@worklossdata.com for more information or to schedule a demo. (2) In depth courses in how to apply the guidelines, using case studies, are offered by specialized training organizations that are independent of WLDI, and completion of these courses may result in CME or CE credit. WLDI recommends the courses offered by AADEP. For information on their courses, go to www.aadep.org, or call AADEP at 800-456-6095. In addition, the Texas Medical Association offers many courses throughout Texas; go to www.texmed.org or call TMA at 800-880-1300.

(*Information provided by WLDI)

Why:

The adoption of the Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) will encourage use of the latest available medical evidence, encourage consistent treatment and encourage prior authorization of treatments as recommended in the guidelines. This is intended to reduce treatment delays, reduce unnecessary UR costs, and improve return to work timeframes.

How do I get a license?

The Official Disability Guidelines is a subscription based site. The Workers' Compensation Administration (WCA) is sponsoring access to the site and has obtained licenses for up to 500 NM Health Care Providers and Attorneys practicing workers' compensation who are eligible, which will enable access to ODG through these licenses for the first year of the program.

Who qualifies for a WCA subsidized license?

NM Health Care Providers and Attorneys who treat or represent workers' compensation claimants qualify. Certain exceptions will be granted on a case-by-case basis by the WCA.

The WCA will maintain the actual license and once registered, eligible NM Health Care Providers and Attorneys will be able to access ODG through them. The WCA reserves the right to limit the number of licenses granted to any single entity depending on demand. Once demand for the license access has

been determined it may be necessary for the WCA to redistribute licenses to provide equal access to the greatest number of subscribers.

The WCA asks the Workers' Compensation community to be prudent in the number of licenses requested. The WCA will attempt to honor all reasonable requests to the extent of license availability.

How do I obtain my WCA subsidized license?

- 1) Go to the WCA website at: www.workerscomp.state.nm.us
- 2) Follow the link on the homepage to the ODG order form.
- 3) Complete the order form ensuring all information requested is provided and certify that you are:
 - a NM Health Care Provider treating workers' compensation patients, or
 - a NM Attorney practicing before the Workers' Compensation Administrative Court.
- 4) The WLDI will contact you by email to confirm your registration and provide the necessary access codes to the online disability guides.

Questions from the ODG Workshop held on June 6, 2013, at the WCA:

Who develops and writes the guidelines?

There is an Editorial Advisory Board whose members are health care professionals that develop, review and approve changes to the guidelines. There are about 100 members most of whom are volunteers and some who are editorial writers and are compensated.

Are Doctors restricted to the guidelines?

Doctors are not bound to the guidelines. The guidelines create a presumption that treatments are reasonable and necessary. WCA rules say that treatment that is reasonable and necessary should be paid. That doesn't mean the treatment is automatically approved.

What if the HCP decides the best reasonable and necessary treatment is outside of the ODG?

If it is determined by the health care provider that treatment for an injured worker outside of the ODG is necessary then approval must be obtained as is currently the case. The ODG has an appendix that can assist in providing language and supporting documents to help in these cases. Eventually it is hoped that the use of ODG will simplify the authorization process but it is not intended to be an "end all" process.

Why do attorneys need access?

In a disputed claim an attorney will want to be able to ensure their clients are receiving reasonable care. In the case of conflicting opinions it could assist attorneys as another resource on medical issues.

If an injured workers treatment is recommended under ODG is there an automatic approval?

The presumption is that it is reasonable and necessary. Thus assuming the HCP is authorized and the care is related to the work injury, the care should be approved. However, pre-approval is always safest.

What is the cost of an ODG license?

An individual license is \$350.00 dollars. For the first year in New Mexico, WLDI is giving a 50 percent discount of \$175.00 for the first year.

If not recommended by the ODG then is the treatment considered not reasonable and necessary?

NO. The WCA has added a line to both rule changes to preclude this from occurring by adding, “...*there is no presumption regarding any other treatment.*”