

**Sixty-sixth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota
In Regular Session Commencing Thursday, January 3, 2019**

HOUSE BILL NO. 1073
(Industry, Business and Labor Committee)
(At the request of Workforce Safety and Insurance)

AN ACT to create and enact a new section to chapter 65-01 and a new section to chapter 65-05 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to a pilot program to assess alternative forms of dispute resolution and the electronic submission of medical billings; to amend and reenact section 65-01-02, subsection 3 of section 65-01-15.1, sections 65-02-21.1, 65-05-09 and 65-05-10, and subsection 4 of section 65-05-28 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to functional capacity examinations, medical examinations for full-time paid firefighters and law enforcement officers, licensing required for allied health care professionals, average weekly wage upon recurrence of disability, combined partial disability benefits, and medical noncompliance; to repeal section 65-02-07 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the organization seal; to provide a continuing appropriation; and to provide for application.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT. Section 65-01-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

65-01-02. Definitions.

In this title:

1. "Acute care" means a short course of intensive diagnostic and therapeutic services provided immediately following a work injury with a rapid onset of pronounced symptoms.
2. "Adopted" or "adoption" refers only to a legal adoption effected prior to the time of the injury.
3. "Artificial members" includes a device that is a substitute for a natural part, organ, limb, or other part of the body. The term includes a prescriptive device that is an aid for a natural part, organ, limb, or other part of the body if the damage to the prescriptive device is accompanied by an injury to the body. A prescriptive device includes prescription eyeglasses, contact lenses, dental braces, and orthopedic braces.
4. "Artificial replacements" means mechanical aids, including braces, belts, casts, or crutches as may be reasonable and necessary due to compensable injury.
5. "Average weekly wage" means the weekly wages the injured employee was receiving from all employments for which coverage is required or otherwise secured at the date of first disability. The average weekly wage determined under this subsection must be rounded to the nearest dollar. If the injured employee's wages are not fixed by the week, they must be determined by using the first applicable formula from the schedule below:
 - a. For seasonal employment, during the first consecutive days of disability up to twenty-eight days the average weekly wage is calculated pursuant to the first applicable formula in subdivisions b through g, and after that are calculated as one-fiftieth of the total wages from all occupations during the twelve months preceding the date of first disability or during the tax year preceding the date of first disability, or an average of the three tax years preceding the date of first disability, whichever is highest and for which accurate, reliable, and complete records are readily available.
 - b. The "average weekly wage" of a self-employed employer is determined by the following formula: one fifty-second of the average annual net self-employed earnings reported the

three preceding tax years or preceding fifty-two weeks whichever is higher if accurate, reliable, and complete records for those fifty-two weeks are readily available.

- c. Hourly or daily rate multiplied by number of hours or days worked per seven-day week.
 - d. Monthly rate multiplied by twelve months and divided by fifty-two weeks.
 - e. Biweekly rate divided by two.
 - f. The usual wage paid other employees engaged in similar occupations.
 - g. A wage reasonably and fairly approximating the weekly wage lost by the claimantinjured employee during the period of disability.
6. "Average weekly wage in the state" means the determination made of the average weekly wage in the state by job service North Dakota on or before July first of each year, computed to the next highest dollar.
 7. "Board" means the workforce safety and insurance board of directors.
 8. "Brother" and "sister" include a stepbrother and a stepsister, a half brother and a half sister, and a brother and sister by adoption. The terms do not include a married brother or sister unless that person actually is dependent.
 9. "Child", for determining eligibility for benefits under chapter 65-05, means a legitimate child, a stepchild, adopted child, posthumous child, foster child, and acknowledged illegitimate child who is under eighteen years of age and resides with the injured employee; or is under eighteen years of age and does not reside with the injured employee but a duty of support is substantiated by an appropriate court order; or is between eighteen and twenty-two years of age and enrolled as a full-time student in any accredited educational institution and dependent upon the injured employee for support; or is eighteen years of age or over and is physically or mentally incapable of self-support and is actually dependent upon the injured employee for support. A child does not include a married child unless actually dependent on the injured employee as shown on the preceding year's income tax returns.
 10. "Compensable injury" means an injury by accident arising out of and in the course of hazardous employment which must be established by medical evidence supported by objective medical findings.
 - a. The term includes:
 - (1) Disease caused by a hazard to which an employee is subjected in the course of employment. The disease must be incidental to the character of the business and not independent of the relation of employer and employee. Disease includes effects from radiation.
 - (2) An injury to artificial members.
 - (3) Injuries due to heart attack or other heart-related disease, stroke, and physical injury caused by mental stimulus, but only when caused by the employee's employment with reasonable medical certainty, and only when it is determined with reasonable medical certainty that unusual stress is at least fifty percent of the cause of the injury or disease as compared with all other contributing causes combined. Unusual stress means stress greater than the highest level of stress normally experienced or anticipated in that position or line of work.
 - (4) Injuries arising out of employer-required or supplied travel to and from a remote jobsite or activities performed at the direction or under the control of the employer.

- (5) An injury caused by the willful act of a third person directed against an employee because of the employee's employment.
 - (6) A mental or psychological condition caused by a physical injury, but only when the physical injury is determined with reasonable medical certainty to be at least fifty percent of the cause of the condition as compared with all other contributing causes combined, and only when the condition did not pre-exist the work injury.
- b. The term does not include:
- (1) Ordinary diseases of life to which the general public outside of employment is exposed or preventive treatment for communicable diseases, except that the organization may pay for preventive treatment for a health care provider as defined in section 23-07.5-01, firefighter, peace officer, correctional officer, court officer, law enforcement officer, emergency medical technician, or an individual trained and authorized by law or rule to render emergency medical assistance or treatment who is exposed to a bloodborne pathogen as defined in section 23-07.5-01 occurring in the course of employment and for exposure to rabies occurring in the course of employment.
 - (2) A willfully self-inflicted injury, including suicide or attempted suicide, or an injury caused by the employee's willful intention to injure or kill another.
 - (3) Any injury caused by the use of intoxicants or the illegal use of controlled substances.
 - (4) An injury that arises out of an altercation in which the injured employee is an aggressor. This paragraph does not apply to public safety employees, including law enforcement officers or private security personnel who are required to engage in altercations as part of their job duties if the altercation arises out of the performance of those job duties.
 - (5) An injury that arises out of an illegal act committed by the injured employee.
 - (6) An injury that arises out of an employee's voluntary nonpaid participation in any recreational activity, including athletic events, parties, and picnics, even though the employer pays some or all of the cost of the activity.
 - (7) Injuries attributable to a pre-existing injury, disease, or other condition, including when the employment acts as a trigger to produce symptoms in the pre-existing injury, disease, or other condition unless the employment substantially accelerates its progression or substantially worsens its severity. Pain is a symptom and may be considered in determining whether there is a substantial acceleration or substantial worsening of a pre-existing injury, disease, or other condition, but pain alone is not a substantial acceleration or a substantial worsening.
 - (8) A nonemployment injury that, although acting upon a prior compensable injury, is an independent intervening cause of injury.
 - (9) A latent or asymptomatic degenerative condition, caused in substantial part by employment duties, which is triggered or made active by a subsequent injury.
 - (10) A mental injury arising from mental stimulus.
11. "Date of first disability" means the first date the injured employee was unable to work because of a compensable injury.

12. "Date of maximum medical improvement" or "date of maximum medical recovery" means the date after which further recovery from, or lasting improvement to, an injury or disease can no longer reasonably be anticipated based upon reasonable medical probability.
13. "Director" means the director of the organization.
14. "Disability" means loss of earnings capacity and may be permanent total, temporary total, or partial.
15. "Doctor" means doctor of medicine or osteopathy, chiropractor, dentist, optometrist, podiatrist, or psychologist acting within the scope of the doctor's license, or an advanced practice registered nurse or certified physician assistant.
16. "Employee" means an individual who performs hazardous employment for another for remuneration unless the individual is an independent contractor under the common-law test.
 - a. The term includes:
 - (1) All elective and appointed officials of this state and its political subdivisions, including municipal corporations and including the members of the legislative assembly, all elective officials of any county, and all elective peace officers of any city.
 - (2) Aliens.
 - (3) County general assistance workers, except those who are engaged in repaying to counties moneys the counties have been compelled by statute to expend for county general assistance.
 - (4) Minors, whether lawfully or unlawfully employed. A minor is deemed sui juris for the purposes of this title, and no other person has any claim for relief or right to claim workforce safety and insurance benefits for any injury to a minor worker, but in the event of the award of a lump sum of benefits to a minor employee, the lump sum may be paid only to the legally appointed guardian of the minor.
 - b. The term does not include:
 - (1) An individual whose employment is both casual and not in the course of the trade, business, profession, or occupation of that individual's employer.
 - (2) An individual who is engaged in an illegal enterprise or occupation.
 - (3) The spouse of an employer or the child under the age of twenty-two of an employer. For purposes of this paragraph and section 65-07-01, "child" means any legitimate child, stepchild, adopted child, foster child, or acknowledged illegitimate child.
 - (4) A real estate broker or real estate salesperson, provided the individual meets the following three requirements:
 - (a) The salesperson or broker must be a licensed real estate agent under section 43-23-05.
 - (b) Substantially all of the salesperson's or broker's remuneration for the services performed as a real estate agent must be directly related to sales or other efforts rather than to the number of hours worked.
 - (c) A written agreement must exist between the salesperson or broker and the person for which the salesperson or broker works, which agreement must

provide the salesperson or broker will not be treated as an employee but rather as an independent contractor.

- (5) The members of the board of directors of a business corporation who are not employed in any capacity by the corporation other than as members of the board of directors.
 - (6) An individual delivering newspapers or shopping news, if substantially all of the individual's remuneration is directly related to sales or other efforts rather than to the number of hours worked and a written agreement exists between the individual and the publisher of the newspaper or shopping news which states the individual is an independent contractor.
 - (7) An employer.
17. "Employer" means a person who engages or received the services of another for remuneration unless the person performing the services is an independent contractor under the common-law test. The term includes:
- a. The state and all political subdivisions thereof.
 - b. All public and quasi-public corporations in this state.
 - c. Every person, partnership, limited liability company, association, and private corporation, including a public service corporation.
 - d. The legal representative of any deceased employer.
 - e. The receiver or trustee of any person, partnership, limited liability company, association, or corporation having one or more employees as herein defined.
 - f. The president, vice presidents, secretary, or treasurer of a business corporation, but not members of the board of directors of a business corporation who are not also officers of the corporation.
 - g. The managers of a limited liability company.
 - h. The president, vice presidents, secretary, treasurer, or board of directors of an association or cooperative organized under chapter 6-06, 10-12, 10-13, 10-15, 36-08, or 49-21.
 - i. The clerk, assessor, treasurer, or any member of the board of supervisors of an organized township, if the person is not employed by the township in any other capacity.
 - j. A multidistrict special education unit.
 - k. An area career and technology center.
 - l. A regional education association.
18. "Fee schedule" means the payment formulas established in the organization publication entitled "Medical and Hospital Fees".
19. "Fund" means the workforce safety and insurance fund.
20. "Hazardous employment" means any employment in which one or more employees are employed regularly in the same business or in or about the establishment except:
- a. Agricultural or domestic service.

- b. Any employment of a common carrier by railroad.
 - c. Any employment for the transportation of property or persons by nonresidents, where, in such transportation, the highways are not traveled more than seven miles [11.27 kilometers] and return over the same route within the state of North Dakota.
 - d. All members of the clergy and employees of religious organizations engaged in the operation, maintenance, and conduct of the place of worship.
21. "Health care provider" includes a doctor, pharmacist, audiologist, speech language pathologist, or naturopath or any recognized practitioner providing skilled services pursuant to the prescription of, or under the supervision or direction of any of these individuals.
22. "Medical marijuana" means the use of all parts of the plant of the genus cannabis, the seeds of the plant, the resin extracted from any part of the plant, and every compound, manufacture, salt, derivative, mixture, or preparation of the plant, the seeds of the plant, or the resin extracted from any part of the plant as a physician-recommended form of medicine or herbal therapy. The term does not include treatments or preparations specifically approved by the United States food and drug administration as a drug product.
23. "Organization" means workforce safety and insurance, or the director, or any department head, assistant, or employee of workforce safety and insurance designated by the director, to act within the course and scope of that person's employment in administering the policies, powers, and duties of this title.
24. "Parent" includes a stepparent and a parent by adoption.
25. "Permanent impairment" means the loss of or loss of use of a member of the body existing after the date of maximum medical improvement and includes disfigurement resulting from an injury.
26. "Permanent total disability" means disability that is the direct result of a compensable injury that prevents an injured employee from performing any work and results from any one of the following conditions:
- a. Total and permanent loss of sight of both eyes;
 - b. Loss of both legs or loss of both feet at or above the ankle;
 - c. Loss of both arms or loss of both hands at or above the wrist;
 - d. Loss of any two of the members or faculties in subdivision a, b, or c;
 - e. Permanent and complete paralysis of both legs or both arms or of one leg and one arm;
 - f. Third-degree burns that cover at least forty percent of the body and require grafting;
 - g. A medically documented brain injury affecting cognitive and mental functioning which renders an injured employee unable to provide self-care and requires supervision or assistance with a majority of the activities of daily living; or
 - h. A compensable injury that results in a permanent partial impairment rating of the whole body of at least twenty-five percent pursuant to section 65-05-12.2.

If the injured employee has not reached maximum medical improvement within one hundred four weeks, the injured employee may receive a permanent partial impairment rating if a rating will assist the organization in assessing the injured employee's capabilities. Entitlement to a rating is solely within the discretion of the organization.

27. "Rehabilitation services" means nonmedical services reasonably necessary to restore a disabled employee to substantial gainful employment as defined by section 65-05.1-01 as near as possible. The term may include vocational evaluation, counseling, education, workplace modification, vocational retraining including training for alternative employment with the same employer, and job placement assistance.
28. "Seasonal employment" includes occupations that are not permanent or that do not customarily operate throughout the entire year. Seasonal employment is determined by what is customary with respect to the employer at the time of injury.
29. "Spouse" includes only the decedent's husband or wife who was living with the decedent or was dependent upon the decedent for support at the time of injury.
30. "Temporary total disability" means disability that results in the inability of an injured employee to earn wages as a result of a compensable injury for which disability benefits may not exceed a cumulative total of one hundred four weeks or the date the injured employee reaches maximum medical improvement or maximum medical recovery, whichever occurs first.
31. "Utilization review" means the initial and continuing evaluation of appropriateness in terms of both the level and the quality of health care and health services provided a patient, based on medically accepted standards. The evaluation must be accomplished by means of a system that identifies the utilization of medical services, based on medically accepted standards, and which refers instances of possible inappropriate utilization to the organization to obtain opinions and recommendations of expert medical consultants to review individual cases for which administrative action may be deemed necessary.
32. "Valid functional capacities examination" means:
 - a. The results of a physical examination consisting of a battery of standardized assessments that offer reliable results in performance-based measures and demonstrate the level and duration an injured employee may return to work.
 - b. The conclusions of medical experts, following observations of other activities the medical expert determines similarly predictive, when the results of the physical examination in subdivision a are not obtained or reliable.
- ~~32.~~33. a. "Wages" means:
 - (1) An injured employee's remuneration from all employment reportable to the internal revenue service as earned income for federal income tax purposes.
 - (2) For members of the national guard who sustain a compensable injury while on state active duty, "wages" includes income from federal employment and may be included in determining the average weekly wage.
 - (3) For purposes of chapter 65-04 only, "wages" means all gross earnings of all employees. The term includes all pretax deductions for amounts allocated by the employee for deferred compensation, medical reimbursement, retirement, or any similar program, but may not include dismissal or severance pay.
- b. The organization may consider postinjury wages for which coverage was not required or otherwise secured in North Dakota for purposes of determining appropriate vocational rehabilitation options or entitlement to disability benefits under this title.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENT. Subsection 3 of section 65-01-15.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

3. A full-time paid firefighter or law enforcement officer is not eligible for the benefit provided under this section unless that full-time paid firefighter or law enforcement officer has

completed five years of continuous service and has successfully passed a medical examination which fails to reveal any evidence of such a condition. An employer shall require a medical examination upon employment, for any employee subject to this section. After the initial medical examination, an employer shall require at least a periodic medical examination as follows: for one to ten years of service, every five years; for eleven to twenty years of service, every three years; and for twenty-one or more years of service, every year. The periodic medical examination, at a minimum, must consist of a general medical history of the individual and the individual's family; an occupational history including contact with and an exposure to hazardous materials, toxic products, contagious and infectious diseases, and to physical hazards; a physical examination including measurement of height, weight, and blood pressure; and laboratory and diagnostic procedures including a nonfasting total blood cholesterol test and ~~papanicolaou smear for women~~. If the medical examination reveals that an employee falls into a recognized risk group, the employee must be referred to a qualified health professional for future medical examination. If a medical examination produces a false positive result for a condition covered under this section, the organization shall consider the condition to be a compensable injury. In the case of a false positive result, neither the coverage of the condition nor the period of disability may exceed fifty-six days. This section does not affect an employee's responsibility to document that the employee has not used tobacco as required under section 65-01-15. Results of the examination must be used in rebuttal to a presumption afforded under this section.

SECTION 3. A new section to chapter 65-01 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

Alternative dispute resolution - Pilot program - Continuing appropriation.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the organization may develop and implement pilot programs to allow the organization to assess alternative forms of dispute resolution to resolve disputes with injured employees. The goal of the pilot program must be to develop timely, cost-effective, and amicable options to resolve disputes during any stage in the claim adjudication or appeal process. A pilot program may address a broad range of approaches, including collaborative efforts between the organization and other public or private entities. Participation of an injured employee in the pilot program is voluntary. No more than fifty thousand dollars per biennium from the workforce safety and insurance fund is appropriated to the organization on a continuing basis for payment of organization expenses associated with the pilot program.

SECTION 4. AMENDMENT. Section 65-02-21.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

65-02-21.1. Licensure required for ~~psychologists and physicians~~ allied health care professionals performing utilization review.

PsychologistsAllied health care professionals making utilization review determinations under sections 65-02-20 and 65-02-21 shall have current licenses from the state board of psychologist examiners. Physicians making utilization review determinations under sections 65-02-20 and 65-02-21 shall have current licenses from the North Dakota board of medicine. This requirement does not apply to psychologists or physiciansor conducting independent medical examinations or independent medical reviews under section 65-05-28 shall have current licenses from a state licensing agency within the United States.

SECTION 5. A new section to chapter 65-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

Medical bills - Electronic acceptance.

The organization shall establish guidelines, systems, and procedures for the acceptance of medical bills and supporting documentation by electronic methods. Health care providers shall submit medical

bills and supporting documentation to the organization by this electronic method no later than July 1, 2021.

SECTION 6. AMENDMENT. Section 65-05-09 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

65-05-09. Temporary total or permanent total disability - Weekly and aggregate benefit.

If an injury causes temporary total or permanent total disability, the fund shall pay to the ~~disabled~~injured employee during that disability a weekly benefit equal to sixty-six and two-thirds percent of the gross weekly wage of the injured employee, subject to a minimum of sixty percent and a maximum of one hundred twenty-five percent of the average weekly wage in the state. If an injured employee is disabled due to an injury, that injured employee's benefits will be based upon the injured employee's wage and the organization benefit rates in effect on the date of first disability.

1. ~~If~~Unless otherwise provided in this subsection, if an injured employee suffers disability but is able to return to employment for a period of three consecutive calendar months or more, that injured employee's benefits will be based upon the wage ~~in effect~~received at the time of the recurrence of the disability ~~or upon the wage that employee received prior to the injury, whichever is higher. If the wage received at the time of the recurrence of the disability is lower than the wage received before the injury and the lower wage is due to the physical limitations of the compensable injury, the injured employee's benefits must be based upon the wage the injured employee received before the injury. It is the burden of the injured employee to show the inability to earn as much as the injured employee earned before the injury is due to the physical limitation related to the injury.~~ The organization benefit rates are those in effect at the time of that recurrence.
2. The disability benefit or the combined disability benefit and dependency award may not exceed the weekly wage of the injured employee after deductions for social security and federal income tax.
3. When an injured employee is permanently and totally disabled, must be maintained in a nursing home or similar facility, and has no dependent parent, spouse, or children, as much of that injured employee's weekly benefit as is necessary may be used by the organization to help defray the cost of the nursing home care.

SECTION 7. AMENDMENT. Section 65-05-10 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

65-05-10. Partial disability - Weekly benefit.

If the injury causes temporary partial disability resulting in decrease of earning capacity, the disability benefit is sixty-six and two-thirds percent of the difference between the injured employee's average weekly wages before the injury and the injured employee's wage-earning capacity after the injury in the same or another employment. Partial disability benefits are subject to a maximum of one hundred twenty-five percent of the average weekly wage in the state. The combined partial disability benefits, dependency allowance, and postinjury wage-earning capacity may not exceed ninety percent of the preinjury weekly wage of the injured employee ~~after deductions for social security and federal income tax.~~

1. The benefits provided by this section are available to any otherwise eligible worker, providing the loss of earning capacity occurs after July 1, 1989. Partial loss of earning capacity occurring prior to July 1, 1989, must be paid at a rate to be fixed by the organization.
2. Benefits must be paid during the continuance of partial disability, not to exceed a period of five years. The organization may waive the five-year limit on the duration of partial disability benefits in cases of catastrophic injury as defined in section 65-05.1-06.1 or when the injured worker is working and has long-term restrictions verified by clear and convincing objective

medical and vocational evidence that limits the injured worker to working less than twenty-eight hours per week because of the compensable work injury. This subsection is effective for partial loss of earnings capacity occurring after June 30, 1991.

3. The employee's earnings capacity may be established by expert vocational evidence of a capacity to earn in the statewide job pool where the worker lives. Actual postinjury earnings are presumptive evidence of earnings capacity if the job employs the employee to full work capacity in terms of hours worked per week, and if the job is in a field related to the employee's transferable skills. The presumption may be rebutted by competent evidence from a vocational expert that the employee's actual earnings do not fairly reflect the employee's earnings capacity in the statewide job pool, considering the employee's capabilities, education, experience, and skills.

SECTION 8. AMENDMENT. Subsection 4 of section 65-05-28 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

4. If an injured employee, or the injured employee's representative, refuses to submit to, or in any way intentionally obstructs, any examination or treatment, or refuses to reasonably participate in medical or other treatments or examinations, ~~the injured employee's right to claim compensation under this title is suspended until the refusal or obstruction ceases. No compensation is payable while the refusal or obstruction continues, and the injured employee is medically noncompliant. If the organization determines an injured employee is medically noncompliant without good cause, the organization shall discontinue disability and vocational rehabilitation benefits. At any time the injured employee is medically noncompliant, efforts by the injured employee to come into compliance are not considered successful compliance until the injured employee has been compliant for a period of at least sixty days. If the period of medical noncompliance continues for sixty days following the date disability and vocational rehabilitation benefits are discontinued, or a second instance of medical noncompliance occurs without good cause, the organization may not pay any further disability and vocational rehabilitation benefits, regardless of whether the injured employee sustained a significant change in medical condition due to the work injury. The period of the refusal or obstruction noncompliance~~ must be deducted from the period for which compensation is payable to the injured employee.

SECTION 9. REPEAL. Section 65-02-07 of the North Dakota Century Code is repealed.

SECTION 10. APPLICATION. Sections 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, and 8 of this Act apply to all claims regardless of date of injury.

Speaker of the House

President of the Senate

Chief Clerk of the House

Secretary of the Senate

This certifies that the within bill originated in the House of Representatives of the Sixty-sixth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota and is known on the records of that body as House Bill No. 1073.

House Vote: Yeas 93 Nays 0 Absent 1

Senate Vote: Yeas 42 Nays 2 Absent 3

Chief Clerk of the House

Received by the Governor at _____ M. on _____, 2019.

Approved at _____ M. on _____, 2019.

Governor

Filed in this office this _____ day of _____, 2019,

at _____ o'clock _____ M.

Secretary of State