

## **The Impact of House Bill 3669 on the Workers' Compensation System Executive Summary**

In 2003, the Oregon Legislature expanded the authority of nurse practitioners to provide medical services within the Workers' Compensation System. The law became effective on January 1, 2004, and sunsets on January 2, 2008. The legislation required the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) to assess the impact of the law change. The department studied several indicators to quantify major factors the law attempts to address. Those factors include access to and continuity of care, utilization, and system cost impacts.

### *Key Findings:*

- In calendar years 2003 through 2005, the total medical billing data reported and associated with nurse practitioners remained consistent at .06 percent of the total for all medical billing data collected by the department (see Chart 1, below).
- Fifty-five nurse practitioners were paid for services under the expanded HB 3669 authority. In 138 claims (.05%) of the 2,986 claims reported by the SAIF Corporation that included at least one billing from a nurse practitioner from November 2004 to January 2006. Nurse practitioners serving as the attending physician were paid a total of \$62,520 (.002%) out of the \$28,825,089 total payments made by SAIF on the 2,986 claims.
- Nurse practitioners served as an attending physician in 138 claims. Of those, 61 claims were disabling, 71 were non-disabling, five were awarded permanent partial disability, and one was determined to be permanently and totally disabled.
- In addition to analyzing available data, DCBS conducted a survey of nurse practitioners. Of the total number of nurse practitioners responding to a survey conducted by DCBS, 238 nurse practitioners reported treating patients with on-the-job injuries, with 179 (72%) treating five or more since January 2004. Existing patients ranked the highest for how nurse practitioners come to treat patients with work-related injuries. Sixty-one percent of nurse practitioners stated that they have seen no change in the number of injured workers they have treated since HB 3669 took effect. Thirty-two percent stated that the number increased.
- Sixty percent of nurse practitioners reported the average length of treatment was 30 days or less. Twenty-four percent reported treatment length of 31 to 60 days, and 15 percent treated 61 to 90 days. Fifty-eight percent have authorized time off work for seven days or less. Thirty-two percent authorized eight to 30 days, seven percent 31 to 60 days, and three percent for more than 60 days.
- The Management-Labor Advisory Committee requested survey questions about the continuity of treatment for injured workers subsequently enrolled in managed care. There were very few responses to these questions. Forty-six percent of nurse practitioners who did respond stated that none of their patients had been enrolled in a managed care organization. Of the injured workers that were enrolled, 55 percent of nurse practitioners indicated they were allowed to continue treating; compared to 44 percent that indicated they were not allowed.

**Chart 1**

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Nurse Practitioners</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
2002	\$183,288,002	\$99,445	0.05%
2003	\$187,601,672	\$111,865	0.06%
2004	\$208,418,176	\$125,842	0.06%
2005 (Q1 - Q2)	\$129,386,995	\$73,539	0.06%