

# MEMORANDUM

July 28, 2006

To: Management-Labor Advisory Committee

From: John Shilts, WCD Administrator

Subject: Recommendations for Nurse Practitioner Sunset

The 2003 Legislature expanded the authority of nurse practitioners to provide medical services in the workers' compensation system. The law sunsets on January 2, 2008.

**The department recommends that MLAC advise the legislature to remove the sunset and make this law change permanent** for the following reasons:

**System costs have not increased with expanded nurse practitioner status.** Based on the analysis of medical billing data reported to the department, nurse practitioner billings remained the same (0.06% of total medical billings) before and after the law change. In addition, analysis of data provided by SAIF Corporation showed that payments to nurse practitioners acting as an attending physician were a very small percentage (0.002%) of the total payments made by SAIF on claims with nurse practitioner billings.

**Some nurse practitioners report providing more services to injured workers after the law change.** The department's survey showed that 32 percent of nurse practitioners surveyed reported an increase in the number of workers treated since the law change. The most often cited reason for treating a worker is because they were an existing patient. This illustrates some expansion in a worker's ability to continue treatment with a provider with whom they have an established relationship.

Given there is no change in system fiscal impact and the positive impact on worker access to treatment, we recommend the sunset be removed.