



JUDICIAL BRANCH WORKERS' COMPENSATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING

February 11, 2026

1:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M.

<https://jcc.granicus.com/player/event/5210>

Advisory Body Members Present: Shelby Wineinger (Chair), Stephanie Bohrer, Heather Capps, Kevin Harrigan, Krista LeVier, Tara Leal, Brandon E. Riley, Jenny K. Rogers, Hugh K. Swift, Jennifer A. Thomas

Advisory Body Members Absent: Christine Alburger, Monica Alemán, Stephanie Cvitkovich, Walter Eissmann.

Others Present: Edward Metro, Edward Metro (Program Manager), Patrick Farrales, Jade Vu, Ed Cho, Katie Kwan, Miki Novitski, Sayuri Okamoto, Jacquelyn Miller, Becky Richard, Alan Turnipseed, Amanda Garcia, Heather Allen, Candace Maibes, Tracy Baril.

OPEN MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call

The chair called the meeting to order at 1:03 P.M. and Program Manager, Edward Metro was asked to take roll call.

Approval of Minutes

The advisory body reviewed and approved the minutes of the March 19, 2025, Judicial Branch Workers' Compensation Program Advisory Committee meeting.

(Motion to approve: Harrigan, Second: Riley)

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS (ITEMS 1-5)

Item 1

Presentation of FY2026-27 Draft Actuarial Report and Premium Allocation

Presenter: Becky Richard, Bickmore Actuarial

Becky Richard presented the actuarial analysis for the upcoming 2026-2027 fiscal year, covering both the Trial Courts and Judiciary programs. The report highlighted favorable development across the board, with actual claims costs coming in lower than previous projections. For the Trial Courts, while payments were slightly higher than expected due to claims settling more quickly, the overall ultimate losses were reduced by nearly \$400,000. The Judiciary program remained stable, allowing for a decrease in outstanding liabilities of approximately \$200,000. Richard noted that while the programs are returning to pre-COVID

"normal" levels of activity, they remain very healthy and well-funded, with a combined fund margin increase of approximately \$6 million.

Regarding funding and premiums, the analysis supported a rate decrease for both programs: a 4% decrease for Trial Courts and a 1% decrease for the Judiciary. Total program funding is projected at just over \$19 million, a 2.5% overall decrease from the prior year. Richard explained that the allocation methodology remains unchanged, utilizing a three-year experience period and capping individual losses at \$75,000 to ensure premium stability. The session concluded with recommendations for further cost suppression, emphasizing the importance of safety training, early claim reporting, and robust return-to-work programs to maintain these downward trends.

Action: *(Motion to approve: Riley, Second: Swift)*

Item 2

Third Party Administrator Annual Audit

Presenter: *Alan Turnipseed, Marsh*

Alan Turnipseed presented the findings of the 2025 annual audit of the program's third-party administrator (TPA) and case management vendor, Sedgwick. The audit evaluated 14 core competency categories across 106 metrics, focusing on performance, compliance with state laws, and member experience. Turnipseed described the TPA audit results as "exemplary," noting a significant year-over-year increase in the overall score from 92.5% to 98.8%. Notably, 89 out of 90 metrics scored above the 90th percentile, with substantial improvements in critical areas such as three-point contacts, investigations, reserving, and settlement resolutions. While the performance was high, the audit identified minor opportunities for improvement regarding the consistency of securing litigation management budgets from defense counsel and addressing adjuster caseloads, which frequently exceeded the program's 120-claim target.

The case management audit also reflected "high performance" with a score of 90.22%, although this was a slight decrease from the previous year. While 10 of the 16 metrics were strong, specific gaps were identified in 60-day midpoint assessments for field case management (40%) and 90-day collaboration between nurse case managers and adjusters (36%). Turnipseed recommended reinforcing managed care guidelines and supervisory oversight to correct these systemic communication lags. Additionally, operational metrics showed favorable trends in timely claim reporting and a high success rate in defending claim denials and medical reviews, despite a 16% increase in pharmacy prescription costs attributed to general market inflation.

Action: *(Motion to approve: Rogers, Second: Riley)*

Item 3

Third Party Administrator Plan of Action

Presenters: Heather Allen, Sedgwick Claims

Candace Maibes, Sedgwick Claims

Heather Allen and Candace Maibes addressed the audit findings, expressing high satisfaction with the TPA score of 98.7% and the managed care score of 90.22%. Regarding the managed care "opportunities," Allen noted that some lower scores (such as the 80% for communication attempts and 83% for initial evaluations) resulted from a disparity in how telephonic and field case management roles are defined within the audit versus Sedgwick's internal structure. Moving forward, Sedgwick will consult with the program to decide whether to separate these roles in the service instructions or provide unified training to ensure compliance with reporting and 30-day progress updates.

The team also outlined specific plans to address more critical gaps, such as the low scores for 60-day field case management considerations (40%) and 90-day team collaborations (35.71%). These expectations have been reinforced with the nursing teams to ensure consistent execution. To address the adjuster caseload concerns, Allen reported that the average has already decreased to 125 claims per adjuster and that hiring for an additional partial position is underway. Finally, Maibes highlighted a strong start to 2026 with a 127.8% closing rate in January and committed to implementing new strategies for settling "Future Med" legacy claims and improving the timely collection of litigation budgets from defense counsel.

Information only, no action was required.

Item 4

Clinical Consultation Pilot Program

Presenters: Shelby Wineinger, Chair

Edward Metro, Lead Staff

Edward Metro provided a seven-month progress report on the Clinical Consultation Pilot Program, which launched on July 1, 2025. The program offers an optional triage service for non-urgent work injuries to streamline care and reduce costs. Metro noted that while awareness efforts included webinars and newsletters, utilization remains low, particularly in larger courts where only 8% of claims utilized the service compared to 18% in medium-sized courts. Of the 21 calls received, 11 resulted in active triage, including referrals to telemedicine, self-care, and urgent care. Initial data indicates the program has already saved approximately \$2,100 by diverting at least one potential emergency room visit to a lower-cost urgent care setting.

The committee discussed the program's future, weighing whether to transition it to a permanent service or continue the pilot phase. Members expressed interest in seeing more robust data to determine if the program could achieve greater savings if more aggressively promoted within larger organizations. Following the discussion, a motion was passed to extend the pilot program for an additional year (through June 30, 2027) to allow for further evaluation and data collection before making a final determination on its permanence.

Questions, Comments, and Actions

- **Data on Non-Utilization:** Heather Capps posed a question to the group, whether data exists for claims where clinical consultation was not used, specifically to see if employees are visiting the ER for injuries that could have been handled by the pilot program.

- Action Taken: Edward Metro confirmed the data is available and agreed to perform a "deep dive" into claim records to provide this comparison for the committee.
- Cost Allocation Concerns: Capps also inquired how the program would be funded if it becomes permanent—specifically, whether larger courts would bear the highest costs regardless of their individual utilization rates.
 - Action Needed: Edward Metro and the JBWCP team will develop a proposed cost-allocation model to present to the committee during the next annual review.

Action: (*Motion to approve: Riley, Second: Harrigan*)

Item 5

Annual Agenda

Presenters: Shelby Wineinger, Chair

Edward Metro, Lead Staff

Edward Metro outlined the 2026 Annual Agenda, focusing on a major one-time initiative: the completion of a 52-page Policies and Procedures document. This governing document memorializes the program's operations and history. The draft is finalized and will be sent to the Advisory Committee this month for a formal review at the March meeting, followed by a presentation to the Litigation Management Committee.

The agenda also includes several ongoing multi-year projects:

- **Premium Allocation:** Following the committee's approval earlier in the meeting, the FY 26-27 premiums will be moved to the consent agenda for the April Judicial Council meeting.
- **Litigation Management:** The program will actively monitor TPA defense fees and implement recommendations from the recent audit to reduce claim defense costs.
- **Financial Goal Setting:** With program funding currently stable and the fund balance remaining positive, the team will develop parameters during the March meeting to protect funding against future market fluctuations.
- **Risk Control:** Plans are underway for the next fiscal year's training curriculum and member outreach to further reduce claim frequency.

Action: (*Motion to approve: Swift, Second: Capps*)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:32 P.M.

Approved by the advisory body on enter date.