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Business Bulletin

June/July 2011

WORKERS' COMPENSATION NEWS

BWC Board of Directors

On May 27th, the BWC Board of Directors assembled for their monthly meeting and unanimously approved the recommended Private Employer base rates and expected loss rates for Policy Year 2011, which will take effect July 1, 2011. The approved rate change offers an overall rate decrease of 4% for Private Employers. BWC will collect an estimated \$1.261 billion in premiums for Policy Year 2011.

Private Employers participating in a group rating program for Policy Year 2011 will not see an increase in the credibility factor or break-even factor.

Outpatient Prescription Drug Formulary was approved by the BWC Board of Directors. This formulary will provide prescribers a list of medications approved for use in the outpatient treatment of conditions related to a claim and information regarding any restrictions or limitations for the use of the approved medication. The formulary is expected to be effective in early September.

The BWC Board of Directors met early on Thursday, June 16th to approve the recommendation by BWC to make no change to the current rate of the Safety & Hygiene assessment. One percent of the premium paid by private employers finances the BWC Safety & Hygiene department which educates employers in preventing industrial accidents and occupational diseases.

Informed Ohio Business Workers' Comp Forum

The Informed Ohio Business Workers' Comp Forum was formed on LinkedIn for businesses to make sure everyone is up to date on workers' compensation issues facing employers and employees in Ohio. This forum encourages its members to share experiences, expertise and also to ask questions related to workers' compensation rules, regulations and policies for businesses in Ohio. To join the forum click here <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Informed-Ohio-Business-Workers-Comp-3810852?mostPopular=&gid=3810852>.

BWC Net Assets

The BWC Chief Fiscal & Planning Officer announced that the net assets had increased a total of \$588 million in April and May resulting in net assets of approximately \$5.9 billion.

SAFETY NEWS

Safety Council Program

The Safety Council Program allows employers to earn rebates on their workers' comp premiums by participating in their local safety council and reducing workplace injuries.

To be eligible for the 2% Safety Council rebate you must be a private employer that is not participating in a group rating or group retrospective program.

Additional requirements are:

- Join your local safety council by July 31, 2011;
- Attend 10 safety council meetings;
- Send a qualified senior-level manager to a safety council sponsored meeting;
- Submit semiannual workplace accident reports for the 2011 calendar year.

To earn the 2% performance bonus rebate you must reduce either the severity or frequency of injuries in your workplace by 10% or maintain both at zero.

The BWC Board of Directors unanimously approved the BWC Administrator's recommendation to allow group rated employers the opportunity to join one of the 81 BWC-sponsored safety councils and earn a 2-percent performance bonus rebate. Employers participating in the rating programs mentioned above **will not** be eligible for the safety council 2% rebate, but will be required to meet all eligibility requirements.

Green Year Training

Ohio employers that are participating in group rating or group retro for Policy Year 2010 (July 01, 2010 to June 30, 2011) and sustained a claim within the "green year" period, calendar year 2009, or the prior year, calendar year 2008, are required to attend an additional two hours of safety training annually. Completion of this mandatory training to maintain group rating status is June 30, 2011.

Sheakley Health & Safety Services is offering several training sessions that meet the green year training requirement. To register for an upcoming training session please contact the Sheakley Safety Department at 800-877-5055 or 513-326-4675 ext. 2014.

Safety Grant for Wholesale & Retail Employers

The BWC recently announced a grant program to reduce or eliminate occupational injuries and illnesses in the wholesale/retail trade sector.

The program will provide funds to employers in these industries to purchase safety equipment. The participants will be required to participate in a study which will assist BWC with future accident prevention programming and best practices.

Participating employers will receive a 2-to-1 matching funds grant to purchase equipment that can reduce workplace injuries and illnesses. Employers are eligible to get up to \$40,000 from BWC through the grant program. Employers who receive the grant will agree to take part in a two-year follow-up study with BWC and NIOSH.

For more information on this Safety Grant opportunity or to find out more about other BWC grant opportunities please contact Safety Consultant Jillian Hacker @ 800-877-5055 ext. 1150 or jhacker@sheakley.com.

UNEMPLOYMENT NEWS

Ohio Unemployment Rate – May

Ohio unemployment rate for May 2011 was 8.6%, down from 10.2% in May 2010.

The U.S. rate for May is down to 9.1% from 9.6% in May 2010.

HUMAN RESOURCE NEWS

Client Training Seminars

Sheakley HR Solutions will be holding training sessions at our corporate office training room throughout 2011. Please contact Kym Martin at 513-728-6668 or kmartin@sheakley.com for more information or to sign up. Seating is limited, so call today!

August Seminar:

17th – Developing Leaders (11 am to 2 pm)

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

House Bill 93 – Prescription Drugs (Burke, D., Johnson, T.)

The House Bill proposed to establish and modify laws regarding the prevention of prescription drug abuse was signed by the Governor on May 20, 2011. The anti-“pill mill” bill will enforce significant licensing mandates and other requirements on pain management clinics and prescription drug distributors. The bill will also implement a drug buy-back program and requires modification to the state’s automated Rx reporting system.

Ohio Supreme Court Ruling

The Ohio Supreme Court ruled early in June that an injured worker who was fired after being injured on the job and before the workers’ compensation claim was filed has a common-law right to sue their employer.

To learn more about these changes and how they will impact your business, please contact our office at 513-326-4675 x2044 or visit our website at www.sheakley.com.