

**WOHC 2006!**  
September 14-16  
Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER • SPRING 2006

## President's Message



**W**hat's WOEMA doing? The California legislature certainly won't let us sleep this year. Under consideration are two

measures that threaten our reimbursement for Workers' Compensation care. A newly proposed medication reimbursement formula may make it infeasible to provide our patients with medications out of the clinic. And a new reimbursement schedule may decrease allowable fees for patient care under Workers' Compensation.

What can be done? Led by WOEMA's board members, **Steve Schumann, MD** and **Peter Swann, MD**, and WOEMA's lobbyist, **Don Schinske**, our legislative committee has become one of the most respected voices on Workers' Compensation in Sacramento. WOEMA is pushing for fair reimbursement for clinic-supplied medications. And we are pushing for the RBRVS system for the Workers' Compensation fee schedule.

Please join us, please assist us, and please support us in these efforts.

Craig Conlon, MD  
WOEMA President

## WOEMA Advocates for Change *Legislative Update for WOEMA Members*

**W**OEMA's work in the California State Capital this year will target challenges surfacing in the Legislature to the Workers' Compensation reforms of 2003 and 2004. In the state's regulatory arena, we will advocate for fair pay in the system for physician dispensing and for medical services as a whole. We will keep you updated on our activities here, as well as through email to all our members.

We will also invite you to provide input on pieces of legislation, in order to better direct WOEMA's efforts. Feedback and comments should be sent to Legislative Co-Chairs **Steve Schumann, MD**, [Steve\\_Schumann@concentra.com](mailto:Steve_Schumann@concentra.com), **Peter Swann, MD**, [peterswann@concentra.com](mailto:peterswann@concentra.com) or lobbyist **Don Schinske** at [dschinske@amgroup.us](mailto:dschinske@amgroup.us)

As of mid-March, the language in many of the bills introduced this year is only now taking true shape. WOEMA is reviewing the following bills, including those that pertain to allowable treatment within Workers' Comp. The Legislative Committee has recommended positions

on several bills that we will post following formal approval by the WOEMA Board of Directors.

**SB 1781 (Alarcón)** – At present, this bill remains a “spot bill” that simply declares Legislative intent to “enact legislation that would improve the process for determining appropriate and necessary

medical treatment for injured workers under the state's workers' compensation system.” WOEMA will advocate a position based on whether the language that appears does or

does not encroach on the primacy of the ACOEM Occupational Medicine Practice Guidelines as the basis for treatment and utilization review.

**AB 1209 (Yee)** – would lift the 24 visit-per-injury annual cap on chiropractic, occupational therapy, and physical therapy visits.

**AB 2287 (Chu)** – another spot bill, would declare Legislative intent allowing acupuncture as a covered form of treatment.

WOEMA is also reviewing proposed positions on the following:

WOEMA will continue to advocate for an overhaul of the Workers' Compensation Official Medical Fee Schedule. Our goal is a switch to an RBRVS-based (non-Medicare) fee schedule that more fairly reimburses for cognitive services.

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# See What Clearly Works in Occupational Medicine

## WOHC 2006: September 14-16 - Lake Tahoe, NV

BY ROGER M. BELCOURT, MD, MPH, CONFERENCE CHAIR 2006



**T**he Western Occupational Health Conference (WOHC) has established a nationwide reputation for being

an outstanding conference held in highly desirable venues. This year is no exception to the excellence that has now become normative for WOHC. Our conference is scheduled at the beautifully remodelled Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe at Incline Village, NV, a scenic 30 minute drive from the Reno airport.

The Hyatt Regency will meet all of our conference needs at a single property. We have secured the lowest room rate over the past four years at WOHC with a \$179 nightly rate. The property is immediately proximate to the "Gem of the Sierras"—beautiful Lake Tahoe. The "Locals" agree that September is the best time to visit Lake Tahoe, as all of the summer tourists have departed and the winter crowd has not yet arrived. Temperatures are pleasant, averaging in the mid '70's to low '80's during the daytime.

Here are some of the highlights of this year's conference. First, the Annual WOEMA Golf Tournament will be headed up by **Dr. Dennis Pocekay** on Wednesday, September 13. Two courses are available for your selection this year. The shorter course is known as the "Mountain Course"; the standard links is the renowned Championship Course. Stunning Lake Tahoe and mountain views render hooks and slices unimportant.

A diverse group of Post-graduate Sessions populate the Thursday calendar. The perennial favorite, "Power Orthopedics" returns, this time with a focus below the waist. Management of these problems in accordance with the ACOEM Guidelines is a new feature this year. What makes this course so popular is the "hands on" portion of the session, reviewing physical



exam and injection techniques. The afternoon features "Advanced Case Studies" a new session designed to plumb the depths of case analysis, causation and management. Two cases will be presented, and an expert panel consisting of an orthopedist, podiatrist, rheumatologist, and occupational physician will facilitate group discussion. Strategies for working most effectively in accordance with the ACOEM Guidelines will be demonstrated.

"Focusing on the Eye" will teach the brass tacks of occupational eye disease and injury; the "hands on" usage of the standard slit lamp and the new hand held slit lamp will be shown.

"Occupational Medicine on the Inside" takes us into the unique world of a Correctional Center occupational medicine issues. The special problems of stress, assault, and infectious disease

will be illustrated along with a site tour of this facility in Carson City, NV.

**Dr. James Craner** will lead a tour of an actual Nevada gold mine with discussion of both underground and surface mining; recent issues with mining in the news and discussion of MSHA's role are included.

Rounding out our Post-graduate Sessions is "Pulmonary Disease and Spirometry Interpretation for the Occupational Physician". This session is packed with "real life" scenarios and practical pointers to both establish and broaden knowledge of this critically important issue in Occupational Medical Practice.

Celebrate the day and renew old friendships at the Welcome Reception on Thursday evening in a lovely facility on the shores of pristine Lake Tahoe. Enjoy food, music, colleagues, and the sunset over the most beautiful lake in the world.

Friday, September 15, marks the start up of an exciting menu of Occupational Topics. Building on the popularity of the Monterey Bay session last year, a panel of experts from the Desert Research Institute, University of Nevada, Reno, and University of California, Davis will introduce us to "The Delicate Environmental Balance of Lake Tahoe: Ramifications for Public Health".

Our Theme "What Clearly Works" will be applied to the subject of the evidence-based use of acupuncture in worker compensation systems. Following our Annual Business

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## See What Clearly...

*Continued from page 2*

Meeting and Rutherford T. Johnstone Memorial Lecture, **David Pating, MD** will discuss the disease of addiction in the workplace with implications for OM Physicians. Our Chronic Pain lecture can be applied to the California CME Requirement and will be followed by **Tee Guidotti, MD** the ACOEM President delivering "Mold: Green and Mean or Just Hyped Hyphae?" After the evening reception, courtesy of our exhibitors, a WOHC 2006 Concierge will guide you to an exciting evening at Lake Tahoe, as you experience it on your own. Or, if you prefer, stick around the Hyatt for our Slot Tournament hosted by the WOHC "Slotmeister" **Walt Newman, MD**.

Our WOEMA and ACOEM Presidents, **Craig Conlon, MD** and **Tee Guidotti, MD**, will both speak to the "State of the Association". Dr. Guidotti will also explore an optimistic vision of the future of our specialty.

Our guests and spouses can spend Friday cruising the Lake in a special outing on a Catamaran. But no outing can match the ruggedness of the next session: "Utilization Review in California: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" with a blue ribbon panel discussion that includes **Drs.**

**Jeffrey Harris, Gideon Letz, and Constantine "Dean" Gean.**

Two options present themselves for obtaining CME while consuming lunch. **Ellison Wittels, MD**, co-author of the Cardiovascular Advisory Panel Guidelines for Commercial Motor Vehicle drivers, will present a 2 hour session on what you need to know about the DOT Exams; practical tips and interpretive pearls await your attendance. Your other option is our "Lunch with the Professors" segment, featuring some of the best minds in our specialty.

Saturday afternoon plenary sessions include "Making Wellness Programs Work for Corporate Health" and will include a panel description of real life experiences running corporate wellness programs and how they stack up to national data. The next topic is on Travel Medicine, only with a different slant. The focus will be on destinations within the United States with an emphasis on prevention.

"Occupational Jeopardy" will be our final session. Test your knowledge of occupational medicine subjects. We are looking for 3 contestants willing to receive an outstanding door prize for their participation. The questions are not esoteric and are designed to have a high probability of a correct response!

The "Signature Event" of WOHC 2006 is: Sunset in the Sierras: An

Evening of Fine Cuisine, Wine Tasting, and Entertainment. Roundtrip bus transportation will take you skyward over the Mount Rose summit to our private lodge where we will be greeted by "Mark Twain" - an important figure in Tahoe's early days. We'll have wine tasting from one of El Dorado County's premiere wineries, Lava Cap. As sunset approaches, we'll go outside to the deck as a tribe of Native American Paiute heralds the arrival of night with native dances and music. There, local astronomers help us view planets and stars, viewed through telescopes. Dinner will be served from 7:30-9:00. This event is being sponsored by Sanofi-Aventis.

I have been most fortunate to have a very talented and energetic planning committee to structure this year's program. Save the dates! An outstanding conference staged at a beautiful venue awaits. See you at Lake Tahoe! ♦

**Register on-line to attend  
WOHC 2006 at  
[www.woema.org](http://www.woema.org)  
beginning May 1, 2006**

**Make hotel reservations  
by calling  
1-800-233-1234  
Room rate \$179 per night**

## WOHC 2006 Planning Committee

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# News You Can Use from the Literature

COMPILED BY CONSTANTINE J. GEAN, MD, MS, MBA, FACOEM  
VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, UNUM PROVIDENT



**M**ost over-the-counter cough suppressants, expectorants, newer-generation non-sedating antihistamines, and

zinc preparations have little efficacy and should not be used in patients with acute cough or upper airway cough (postnasal drip syndrome) per the newly issued Am. Coll. of Chest Physicians. Authored by a 26-expert panel, the Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Cough have algorithms for management of acute, subacute and chronic cough. A first-generation antihistamine/decongestant preparation (brompheniramine and sustained-release pseudoephedrine) are recommended for acute cough associated with common cold (as well as PND and throat clearing) (naproxen also may help cough). Also recommended - DTaP series be administered per CDC guidelines to forfend pertussis. *CHEST* 2006;129:suppl 1. (and online at [http://www.chestjournal.org/cgi/content/full/129/1\\_suppl/1S](http://www.chestjournal.org/cgi/content/full/129/1_suppl/1S))

■ **Jobs requiring standing or walking at least 75% of the time at work are associated with a relative risk (RR) of 1.75 for hospital treatment of varicose veins** (vs. all other employees) per a prospective study of 8,664 working-age adults employed 1990 to present. RR = 1.75 for men and 1.82 for women. *Occup Environ Med.* 2005 Dec;62(12):847-50

■ **U.S. patients get proper medical care from doctors and nurses only 54.9% of the time**, regardless of their

race, income, education or insurance status. Study evaluated data from medical records and telephone interviews of a random sample of people living in 12 communities and measured aggregate scores from 439 indicators of the quality of care for 30 chronic and acute conditions. Women had higher scores than men (56.6% vs. 52.3%). *N Engl J Med.* 2006 Mar 16;354(11):1147-56

■ **Myocardial injury occurs frequently in patients hospitalized for moderate to severe CO poisoning and is a significant predictor of later mortality** per a prospective cohort study of 230 adult patients treated for CO poisoning with hyperbaric O<sub>2</sub>. Median follow-up of 7.6 years had 54 deaths (24%)-12 while in the hospital. Myocardial injury occurred in 85 (37%), of these 32 (38%) eventually died during the follow-up vs. 22 (15%) of 145 patients who did not sustain myocardial injury. *JAMA* 2006 Jan 25;295(4):398-402

■ **Later-generation wireless computers and cell phones in a shirt or breast pocket can pose a danger to pacemakers and implantable defibrillators** which can respond to EMI with complete inhibition of function, mode reset, and other serious problems per Wm. H. Spencer, MD of Baylor College of Medicine at a recent symposium. Implanted devices reject all but the strongest EM signals, i.e., those within 10 cm of the device or leads. A patient should not have a search using a handheld wand over the chest. *Internal Medicine News Volume 39, Issue 5, Page 6* (3/1/06)

■ **Increased fruit and vegetable intake in the range commonly consumed is associated with a 26% reduced risk of stroke** per a meta-analysis of 8 studies (n=257,551 with 4,917 stroke events with an ave. follow-up of 13 years). Compared with individuals who had less than 3 servings of fruit and vegetables per day, the pooled relative risk (RR) of both ischemic and hemorrhagic stroke was 0.89 for those with 3 to 5 servings/d, and 0.74 for those with >5/d. *Lancet.* 2006 Jan 28;367(9507):320-6

■ **Ad-36 virus is associated with increased body weight and lower serum lipids in humans.** Two cohort studies: Study 1: Presence of antibodies to adenoviruses and were assessed in 502 obese and thin subjects. Study 2: BMI and %body fat in 28 twin pairs discordant for Ad-36 antibodies. Study 1: showed association of obesity and positive Ad-36 antibody status (Ad-36 antibodies in 30% of obese, 11% of nonobese). Study 2: Twin pairs: antibody-positive twins had higher BMIs (24.5 vs 23.1, P < 0.03) and %body fat (29.6 vs 27.5, P < 0.04). *Int J Obes (Lond).* 2005 Mar;29(3):281-6

■ **The Food and Drug Administration issued an information bulletin for the abortifacient drug RU-486 (Mifeprex)** and said that that the two women who died recently after taking the medication bring to seven the number of associated fatalities since its 2000 approval. The agency said so far it was not able to confirm any cause of death and was investigating 4 earlier deaths surrounding RU-486 use

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## News You Can Use

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involved *Clostridium sordellii* sepsis (a rarely fatal bacterium). The 3/18/06 Washington Post quotes a Planned Parenthood executive as saying, "To put this in context . . . 560,000 medication abortions have occurred in the United States. We know of seven reported deaths of women who had medication abortions in North America," <http://www.fda.gov/cder/drug/infopage/mifepristone/>

■ **Saw palmetto did not improve symptoms or objective measures of benign prostatic hyperplasia** in this double-blind trial which randomly assigned 225 men over 49 years with moderate-to-severe symptoms of BPH to 1 year of saw palmetto (160 mg bid) or placebo. *N Engl J Med.* 2006 Feb 9;354(6):557-66

■ **Women with highest soy food consumption had 37% lower relative risk (RR) of fracture in postmenopausal women**, per a study in 24,403 postmenopausal Chinese women with no history of fracture or cancer (mean follow-up of 4.5 years; 1770 incident fractures). RR of fracture = 1.00, 0.72, 0.69, 0.64, and 0.63 from lowest to highest quintiles of soy protein intake (for extremes of intake RR=0.52 within 10 years of menopause vs 0.71 for late postmenopause). Similar results were found for intake of isoflavones. *Arch Intern Med.* 2005 Sep 12;165(16):1890-5

■ **Smoking may hinder the brain's recovery from alcoholism** per a study of 25 (14 smokers and 11 non-smokers) recovering alcoholics. Brain N-acetylaspartate and choline measurements were made after seven and 35 days of abstinence. The results were positively correlated with improvement in various cognitive domains including executive function, visuospatial learning/skills, fine motor skills, auditory

verbal learning and general intelligence. The authors suggest it may be beneficial for alcoholics in early abstinence to stop smoking as well. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research.* 2006; 30(3):1-13

■ **Coenzyme Q10 was associated with a 27% decrease in migraine attack-frequency and decreased headache-days and days-with-nausea** after 3 months of use per a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial in 42 migraine patients using CoQ10 (100 mg tid) and placebo. *Neurology* 2005;64:713-5

■ **Injection pens are associated with needlestick injuries six times more often than syringes** per a one-year retrospective study was conducted in 24 sentinel French public hospitals. 60% of needlestick injuries with injection pens (used by patients when auto-administering insulin, interferon, apokinon etc.) were related to disassembly *J Hosp Infect.* 2006 Mar 13

■ **Adding oxaliplatin to a standard, two-drug chemotherapy regimen led to a 30% improvement in median survival among patients** per a study of 244 patients with previously untreated, unresectable colorectal cancer. *Cancer Invest.* 2006;24(2):154-9 ♦

## Visit WOEMA

### On-Line Job Bank at [www.woema.org](http://www.woema.org)

Have you visited the WOEMA Job Bank lately? This powerful feature was recently added to the WOEMA website and constructed to help connect members with new employment opportunities.

Job-seekers can post resumes anonymously online, browse job postings, create a personal "Job Alert" and manage resumes through a personalized Job Seeker Account – all at no cost for WOEMA members!

Posting job opportunities in our on-line Job Bank is a great way to reach the ideal candidate. Several recruitment pricing options are available including a 60-day posting for only \$125. Employers and recruiters can also search our resume pool and pay only for the resumes that fit specified criteria. Be sure to ask about special rates if you are interested in posting a job listing as well as placing an advertisement in the WOEMA Newsletter.

For complete details about the WOEMA Job Bank, visit our website [www.woema.org](http://www.woema.org) and click on "Job Bank" or call 415-927-5736.

## Save a Tree

If you would like to receive future WOEMA newsletters via email, please contact the WOEMA office at [woema@hp-assoc.com](mailto:woema@hp-assoc.com) or call 415-927-5736.



## Former WOEMA President Ren Schmidt Remembered

*Los Angeles Times - 1/19/2006*

### **SCHMIDT, Reynold Ted MD**

(AKA Ren, Rennie and R.T.)

Went home to God Friday, January 13. He was born on December 2, 1936 in Detroit, Michigan to Alfred Schmidt and Alvina Arlt Schmidt just minutes after his identical twin brother, Ronald. His family moved to North Hollywood when he was eight; he always considered California his home. He graduated from North Hollywood High School, went on to receive a BA degree from UCLA followed by his Doctorate in Medicine from UCLA. He subsequently earned a Master's Degree in Public Health at UCLA. He married his dear wife Madlyn Lee Hensley in 1965. Their lives were graced by their children Paul Andrew and Susan Elizabeth. A consummate professional Ren was a highly respected specialist in the field of Occupational Medicine and Toxicology. He was

the Medical Director of Union Oil Company ultimately responsible for the health and safety of 30,000 employees. He taught toxicology at both CSUN and CSULA. He loved his work and always stayed on the top of his game professionally. He was a mentor to many younger colleagues and to the friends of his children.

At age 11 he took up his life long hobby and passion for beekeeping. He loved nature, the great outdoors and considered a bee yard his home away fromhome.

What he wanted to be remembered for was that he loved his family: his wife Madlyn Lee; his children, Paul and Susan; his siblings Ron (Linda) and Sandy and his wonderful nieces and nephews.

*Note: A donation was made to Doctors Without Borders by WOEMA in memory of Ren.*



*Drs. Ren Schmidt and Dean Gean cruising Lake Mead during the 2004 Western Occupational Health Conference held at Lake Las Vegas.*

## Interesting and Useful Web Sites

CONTRIBUTED BY CONSTANTINE J. GEAN, MD, MS, MBA, FACOEM

### **Get Disability Definitions in Detail**

Ever have a disability form handed to you by a patient and don't have a clue what represents "reasonable practice" in this area? You are not alone and the Social Security Administration has created a useful and thorough site for physicians to help them understand their disability determination process. This site lists evidentiary requirements needed to determine disability for major body systems, e.g., neurological, musculoskeletal, endocrine and 11 others. To help the physician, useful limits are specified such as, "Reconstructive surgery or surgical arthrodesis of a major weight-bearing joint: with

inability to ambulate ..., and return to effective ambulation did not occur, or is not expected to occur, within 12 months of onset". A useful reference for "just-in-time" learning when those forms arrive on your desk. <http://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/AdultListings.htm>

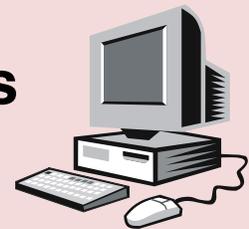
### **Bonus Site #1 – Consumer Lab.com**

A Harvard dietitian recommended [www.consumerlab.com](http://www.consumerlab.com) which performs independent tests on non-prescription supplements and posts lists on Government recalls and warnings about supplements. Lots of free information is in the public part of the site, though full access to the evaluation mono-

graphs requires a subscription (\$27.00/yr. or \$10/monograph). <http://www.consumerlab.com/news/index.asp>

### **Bonus Site #2 – A Simple Guide to Medicare's Prescription Drug Coverage (Part D)**

If your patients ask you the same questions they ask me, this site might help. The National Council on the Aging has a Web site to help people with Medicare find and compare prescription coverage plans and enroll online. To learn more, visit <http://www.mymedicarematters.com> (sponsored by AstraZeneca). ♦



## WOEMA Board Sets Course for 2006



*The WOEMA Board and Committee chairs met in January 2006 at the headquarters of UnumProvident in Glendale, CA, to map out their plans for the year ahead. Pictured here are: (From Left Front Row) Warner Hudson, MD, Pamela Hymel, MD, Steve Schumann, MD, Jim Seward, MD, Roger Belcourt, MD, Craig Conlon, MD, Peter Swann, MD, Walter Newman, MD, and Constantine Gean, MD. (From Left Back Row) Bob Orford, MD, Paul Papanek, MD, Ellyn McIntosh, MD, Pat Luedtke, MD, Alan Randle, MD, and Roman Kownacki, MD.*

### Call for Nominations

The WOEMA Board is seeking nominations for the 2007 slate of officers and directors. Two director positions will be available. To express your interest, contact Dr. Constantine Gean, Chair of the Nominating Committee, at [cgean@unumprovident.com](mailto:cgean@unumprovident.com)



### WOEMA Advocates...

*Continued from page 1*

**AB 2198 (Houston)** – Proposes fines or imprisonment for prescription of pain medication that is “clearly excessive,” defined “an amount or extent that is both (1) without substantial medical basis and (2) substantially greater than the usual amount of prescribing, administration, or use of therapeutic modalities.”

**AB 2856 (Hancock)** – Requires physicians to obtain informed consent for off-label prescribing.

**AB 2524 (DeVore)** – Sets the fee schedule for physician-dispensed drugs at Average Wholesale Price (AWP) less 17 percent, plus a \$7.25 handling fee.

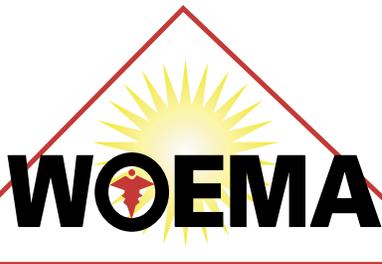
**SB 162 (Ortiz)** – Creates a separate, stand-alone Department of Public Health administrated by a physician State Health Officer.

In addition, we are reviewing several bills pertaining to public and environmental health, as well as the impending initiative in the state of Arizona that would bar injured workers from receiving Workers’ Comp benefits if they were alcohol or drug-impaired when injured.

On the regulatory front, WOEMA will continue to advocate for an overhaul of the Workers’ Compensation Official Medical Fee Schedule. Our goal is a switch to an RBRVS-based (non-Medicare) fee schedule that more fairly reimburses for cognitive services. WOEMA has been informed that the overhaul is a priority for the Division of Workers’ Compensation in 2006. ♦

**WOEMA is working for you, our members. Questions? Please feel free to contact WOEMA’s lobbyist Don Schinske at: [dschinske@amgroup.us](mailto:dschinske@amgroup.us) or call 916-444-3568.**

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# Western Occupational Health Conference

Occupational Medicine:  
*What Clearly Works*

**September 14-16, 2006**

Hyatt Regency Lake Tahoe  
Incline Village, Nevada

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Dear Members and Colleagues:**

WOEMA invites you to join us for an evening reception that features a sneak preview of the topics and speakers for the Western Occupational Health Conference (WOHC) taking place at beautiful Lake Tahoe. You'll find out what's ahead as we continue our tradition of educational excellence and warm hospitality.

**WHAT:** WOEMA Reception  
Hors d'oeuvres and libations are sponsored by the Cal-OSHA Reporter and Workers' Comp Executive

**WHERE:** Hyatt Regency Century Plaza Hotel  
2025 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles  
Café Mystique (1st Floor, near the swimming pool) during the American Occupational Health Conference (AOHC)

**WHEN:** Saturday, May 6, 2006  
6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

**RSVP:** [woema@hp-assoc.com](mailto:woema@hp-assoc.com)

Guests of WOEMA members are welcome to attend.  
For questions, call the WOEMA office at 415-927-5736.