



Western Occupational & Environmental Medical Association

Public Policy Platform

The Western Occupational & Environmental Medical Association (WOEMA) is an organization of nearly 600 physicians and other health care specialists who champion the health and safety of workers, workplaces, and the environment. WOEMA is a regional component of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM), our national medical association headquartered near Chicago, Illinois, and comprising about 4,500 members nationally. Occupational Medicine physicians are experts in issues where work affects workers' health, or where workers' health affects the workplace, including care of workers' injuries and illnesses under Workers' Compensation, risk assessments related to toxic chemicals and other pollutants, management of confidential medical information, assessing fitness for duty before and during employment, and workplace preventive services aimed at improving health and productivity. In addition to its educational and service functions, WOEMA is dedicated to legislative and regulatory advocacy in our five member states (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, and Utah). We recognize the need for more effective laws and regulations in a number of areas related to occupational and environmental health and focus on:

- ▶▶ **Promoting the prevention of occupational illness and injuries as the most cost-effective method of improving the health of workers. This includes improved surveillance/tracking of workplace hazards, illnesses, and injuries; improved delivery of workers' compensation services to low wage workers; and improvement of OSHA Standards (both Federal and State).**
- ▶▶ **Promoting universal health coverage for the American workforce**
- ▶▶ **Supporting efforts to prevent global climate change**
- ▶▶ **Supporting public health efforts to promote a healthy and sustainable "Built Environment" as we recognize that these issues impact the general public as well as workers and employers.**
- ▶▶ **Supporting increased funding for OEM Graduate Medical Education**
- ▶▶ **Encouraging adequate OEM physician staffing at State agencies**

WOEMA Public Policy Platform *(continued)*

OUR POLICY SUPPORT GOALS:

- ▶▶ To encourage incorporation of current evidence into State OSHA standards
- ▶▶ To provide expertise to the appropriate state Divisions of Workers' Compensation on issues as they arise (e.g. electronic reporting, etc.)
- ▶▶ To support efforts by academic and governmental groups and NGOs to improve workplace safety and health for all workers (e.g., enhanced data collection, care provision to low-wage workers)

OUR LEGISLATIVE/REGULATORY PRIORITIES

I. Advancing Quality in Occupational Medicine services

- ▶▶ Advancing Quality in Occupational Evidence-Based Medicine in clinical practice and medical-legal evaluations
 - *Improved education & training for physicians who perform medical-legal evaluations, including report writing]*
 - *Education regarding best medication prescribing practices and adherence to formularies*
- ▶▶ Disability Management and facilitating functional recovery (including Return To Work (RTW))
- ▶▶ Promote the recognition of the role of lifestyle factors/comorbidities on work
- ▶▶ Promote quality in coding and care provision
 - *Coding: ACOEM coding, no up-coding, promote ACOEM coding methodology*
 - *Utilization Review (UR): how to improve UR process (see WOEMA whitepaper)*
 - *Credentialing of Occupational Medicine providers*
- ▶▶ Promote disclosure of outcome measures
 - *Provider: opiate prescribing, RTW rates (that incorporate availability of modified work), costs, non-certifications of treatment requests and appeals*
 - *Carrier: UR approval and denial rates, complaints about UR*
- ▶▶ Encourage transition from 5th to 6th edition of the AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment

II. Addressing Environmental Public Health issues/concerns

- ▶▶ Provide input on regulation and policy on climate change efforts and funding that involves public health and environmental health departments
- ▶▶ Provide expertise and support to public health agencies regarding the use of safer substances and practices to replace those that adversely impact human and environmental health (e.g., lead, pesticides)

Approved by WOEMA Board of Directors, February 2017.

Western Occupational & Environmental Medical Association (WOEMA)

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