



Western Occupational & Environmental Medical Association
A Component Society of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

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April 26, 2008

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The Honorable Linda Lingle
Governor, State of Hawaii
Executive Chambers
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: HB 2929

**WOEMA Position: REQUEST
YOUR SIGNATURE**

Dear Governor Lingle,

The Western Occupational and Environmental Medical Association (WOEMA) urges you to sign HB 2929, which would help ensure that injured workers receive timely, medically necessary care through the Workers' Compensation system. WOEMA is the regional component of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, and our 400 members include physicians who participate in the Workers' Compensation systems of Hawaii, California, Arizona, Nevada and Utah as primary treating physicians, medical directors, and providers of independent medical and utilization review.

Under Hawaii statute, workers are ensured "immediate" and "reasonable" medical care through their employer for workplace injury or illness. If an employer contests the compensability for treatment, and can also select the physician who would conduct the independent medical examination, the worker's right to an unbiased evaluation may be compromised. The recourse now available to the worker – a lengthy appeal through the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations – strains the patient, the treating physician, and the system as a whole. Necessary treatment may be delayed, which increases the risk of medical complications and prolonged disability.

WOEMA believes that the compromise proposed – that independent medical and impairment rating examinations be performed by a mutually agreed-upon physician – sets an appropriate balance between the parties while ensuring timely delivery of care. HB 2929 represents a fairer, more

practical approach to resolving contested claims, and we strongly urge your signature.

Thank you for your consideration. Please, you or your staff should feel free contact us if you have any questions about our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven C. Schumann MD". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Steven C. Schumann, MD
Legislative Chair

cc. Members, WOEMA Legislative Committee
Roman Kownacki, MD, WOEMA President
Kerry Parker, WOEMA Executive Director