



Testimony of Chesapeake Employers' Insurance Company and Injured Workers' Insurance Fund in Opposition to House Bill 1285

House Bill 1285 proposes to authorize a licensed social worker to register as a rehabilitation practitioner, and to authorize a licensed certified social worker–clinical to provide evaluation services for workers' compensation claims related to permanent impairments involving a behavioral or mental disorder under Labor and Employment, § 9-721.

Although there is no concern with a licensed social worker to register as a rehabilitation practitioner in order to provide vocational rehabilitation services, there is great concern for a licensed certified social worker–clinical to provide evaluation services that are presently only provided for by physicians, psychologists, and psychiatrists.

Currently, under Labor and Employment, § 9-721, only a physician or psychologist provides permanent impairment ratings for purposes of workers' compensation evaluations (COMAR 14.09.09.03 extends psychiatric impairment evaluations to psychiatrists as well). Given the long-standing practice of only physicians, psychologists, or psychiatrists providing ratings, Chesapeake Employers' Insurance Company and the Injured Workers' Insurance Fund are concerned about the departure to non-physicians, psychologists or psychiatrists providing ratings and evaluations since the evaluations must conform to standards set forth by the American Medical Association's "Guide to the Evaluations of Permanent Impairment", and therefore have been routinely completed by the above-mentioned physicians.

Given the departure from well settled law and practice, Chesapeake Employers' Insurance and Injured Workers' Insurance Fund respectfully oppose House Bill 1285 as to the licensed certified social worker–clinical providing evaluation services.

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