

## Legislative Update:

WMHCA has agreed to hire Melanie Stewart to lobby on our behalf in favor of a bill that would include mental health counselors as authorized providers under Labor and Industries workers compensation.

**BACKGROUND:** The Department of Labor and Industries is authorized to provide financial support for treatment for injuries, including mental health issues, resulting from events at the workplace. According to authorizing legislation, the Department is charged with establishing the standards for treatment, as well as determining who is authorized to provide mental health services:

*RCW 51.36.010 To this end, the department shall establish minimum standards for providers who treat workers from both state fund and self-insured employers.*

However, according to the administrative rules that were generated, only certain provider professions were authorized to provide treatment:

*(3) Mental health services to workers are limited to those provided by psychiatrists, doctoral level psychologists and psychiatric advanced registered nurse practitioners and according to department policy. WAC 296-21-270*

Accordingly, licensed mental health counselors are not authorized to provide mental health services under workers compensation in Washington State.

**WORKING ON YOUR BEHALF:** Our lobbyist will be working on our behalf to support legislation in the upcoming session to change this restriction, and authorize mental health counselors to provide treatment under workers compensation. The bill number is not yet determined, but we'll keep you posted.

For more information, contact Duncan Hollomon, JD, PhD, WMHCA board member at [DuncanHollomon@cs.com](mailto:DuncanHollomon@cs.com).