



June 11, 2025

The Honorable Lola Smallwood-Cuevas
Chair, Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee
1021 O Street, Room 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **AB 1293 (Wallis) – Qualified Medical Evaluator Report Quality
SPONSOR + SUPPORT, AS AMENDED 4/9/2025**

Dear Chair Smallwood-Cuevas,

On behalf of the members of the California Coalition on Workers' Compensation (CCWC), we are pleased to serve as both **SPONSOR** and **SUPPORTER** of this important legislation.

The California Coalition on Workers' Compensation (CCWC) is an association representing public and private sector employers across California. Our mission is to advocate for a balanced and efficient workers' compensation system—one that ensures injured workers receive fair and timely benefits while maintaining cost-effectiveness for employers. Our diverse membership includes businesses of all sizes, as well as cities, counties, school districts, and other public entities.

According to the Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation's (CHSWC), in 2023 California's workers' compensation system covered 16.7 million employees who reported a total of 748,982 occupational injuries and illnesses with a total cost of \$22.3 billion.¹ California's worker's compensation system is known to be expensive, complex, and litigious.

The various parties in the system – claims administrators, doctors, injured workers, attorneys – experience a wide range of disputes that need to be resolved quickly and effectively to avoid delays. Some disputes require the use of the state-administered Panel QME Process, whereby the Division of Workers' Compensation sends a panel of three independent doctors who are available to complete a medical legal report to resolve the dispute. In 2022 the state received 192,600 requests for QME Panels and assigned 141,239 Panels². These are not minor disputes being resolved – these reports determine whether temporary disability continues, whether a requested medical treatment is appropriate, or how much permanent impairment a worker has suffered from the injury.

¹ [CHSWC 2023 Annual Report, Page 30](#)

² [CHSWC 2023 Annual Report, Page 117](#)

Unfortunately, the Panel QME reports are frequently inadequate for the purpose of resolving disputes in the system. Resolution of disputes is frequently delayed so a supplemental report can be prepared or so the parties can depose the Panel QME. These delays harm injured workers and increase costs for employers. AB 1293 seeks to improve the quality of Panel QME reports with the aim of resolving disputes faster. Specifically, the bill requires the Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) to take three actions:

- **Implement State Auditor's Recommendation for Evaluating QME Report Quality**
In 2019 the legislature asked the California State Auditor to evaluate the Panel QME system. One recommendation from the auditor was for the DWC to create and implement a plan to review the quality and timeliness of reports so that the state can ensure efficient resolution of workers' compensation claims. AB 1293 creates a statutory requirement for the DWC to implement this recommendation and ensure that Panel QME reports are timely, complete, and sufficient to resolve disputes. The bill also requires that the required annual reports are made available to the public.
- **Develop a Template Panel QME Request Form**
Labor Code Section 4062.3 outlines the types of information that can be provided to Panel QMEs and the process for doing so. Despite these guidelines, QMEs often receive incomplete or inadequate case information, which can compromise the accuracy and utility of their reports. AB 1293 requires the DWC to create and make available a template Panel QME request form that will help guide system stakeholders to provide the relevant information to medical evaluators.
- **Create a Template for Panel QME Reports**
To improve the clarity and consistency of Panel QME evaluations, AB 1293 directs the DWC to develop and distribute a standardized QME report template. When used alongside more complete request submissions, this measure will facilitate the production of higher-quality medical reports, thereby reducing the need for costly and time-consuming follow-ups.

All the actions described above would be subject to the Administrative Procedures Act so that injured workers, labor representatives, doctors, employers, and other stakeholders are given thorough opportunity to contribute as the processes are developed and implemented. There is, of course, a cost to the state to have the DWC implement AB 1293, but all costs for the DWC are paid by direct fees on employers and there is no general fund impact.

For these reasons, we are proud to **SPONSOR and SUPPORT** your **AB 1293**.

Sincerely,



Jason Schmelzer

Managing Director

CC: Members and Consultants, Senate Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement
Committee