



YUKON WORKERS'
COMPENSATION
HEALTH AND
SAFETY BOARD

SUBJECT: Client Services POLICY NO.: CS-06

BOARD APPROVAL: [Signature]

APPROVAL DATE: 94-06-15

BOARD ORDER NO.: _____

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 15, 1994

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Feb. 11, 1994
[Signature]*

POLICY STATEMENT

SECTION
REFERENCE: **3**

POLICY:

CHRONIC PAIN AND CHRONIC PAIN SYNDROME

GENERAL INFORMATION

Pain is defined by the International Association for the Study of Pain as "an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage and described in terms of such damage." Pain falls into a number of sub-categories including acute pain, recurrent acute pain, chronic pain, chronic pain syndrome, chronic pain disorder, psychogenic pain, fibromyalgia syndrome and somatoform pain disorder.

This policy deals with chronic pain and chronic pain syndrome. The American Medical Association **Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment** has identified 8 characteristics to be considered when making a diagnosis of chronic pain. The existence of 2 or more of these characteristics may indicate chronic pain syndrome.

Diagnostic Characteristics of Chronic Pain

1. Duration
2. Dramatization
3. Diagnostic Dilemma
4. Drugs
5. Dependence
6. Depression
7. Disuse
8. Dysfunction

All claims decisions are appealable to the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board.

Chronic Pain and Chronic Pain Syndrome

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POLICY

A. DEFINITIONS

(a) CHRONIC PAIN

Chronic pain is pain that lasts longer than the expected normal healing time for the tissue involved. Chronic pain may exist in the absence of chronic pain syndrome.

(a) CHRONIC PAIN SYNDROME

Chronic pain syndrome is a disabling pain which usually lasts beyond the normal healing time, and has resulted in a significant or marked life disruption. Chronic pain may develop into chronic pain syndrome.

(c) DEEMING

Deeming means the Board's determination of a worker's earning capacity.

B. ENTITLEMENT TO COMPENSATION

In order for a worker to be entitled to receive compensation, the worker must have a **work-related** disability that **arose out of and in the course of employment**.

Chronic Pain and/or Chronic Pain Syndrome of its' own is not compensable. However, if it can be established that chronic pain or chronic pain syndrome is the result of a work-related disability, it may be treated if it hinders the recovery of the disabled worker. There must be a direct link between the work-related disability and the pain.

C. GUIDELINES FOR CHRONIC PAIN AND CHRONIC PAIN SYNDROME

Prevention shall be the guiding principle when dealing with workers suffering from chronic pain in order to prevent the development of chronic pain syndrome.

Prevention guidelines shall include, but are not limited to the following:

- (a) Early intervention shall be undertaken to address chronic pain in order to prevent and/or reduce the effects of chronic pain syndrome;
- (b) If it is suspected that a worker who has pain that may develop into chronic pain or chronic pain syndrome, the worker shall be referred for medical examination, case management or interdisciplinary assessment;
- (c) A proactive treatment program shall be undertaken that focuses on returning a worker to a productive level of functioning. This may include an interdisciplinary rehabilitation treatment program and/or a pain management treatment program which takes into consideration the needs of the worker as determined by the board;
- (d) A worker shall be expected to actively participate in their own recovery; and
- (e) Families shall be encouraged to participate in the recovery of a worker.

D. LIMITATIONS TO COMPENSATION

- (a) The timely diagnoses of Chronic Pain or Chronic Pain Syndrome must be an integral part of claims management. With time being of the essence, a worker will be considered to be suffering from Chronic Pain or Chronic Pain Syndrome if their pain persists beyond the normal healing time of the compensable injury.
- (b) Once considered to be suffering from Chronic Pain or Chronic Pain Syndrome a worker may receive rehabilitation for Chronic Pain or Chronic Pain Syndrome for six months.
- (c) There is a point at which no further intervention by the WCHSB will assist a worker. The worker's disability has stabilized and every effort has been undertaken to assist them in their recovery and return to work. At this point, a decision will be made regarding their earning capability. When a worker is deemed, appropriate consideration shall be given to the suitability of occupations and availability of work in those occupations.

E. EXCEPTION CLAUSE

At the discretion of the Director of Client Services, the six month time frame for treatment of Chronic Pain and/or Chronic Pain Syndrome may be extended to conclude a treatment program. Notification of any exception must be provided to the President with reasons for the exception.

PERMANENT IMPAIRMENT AWARD

A permanent impairment award shall not be made for either chronic pain or chronic pain syndrome.

REFERENCES

Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board:

Disability Policy Statement

Permanent Impairment Policy Statement

Pre-Existing Conditions Policy Statement

Rehabilitation Policy Statement

Suspension, Reduction and Termination of Compensation Policy Statement