



DEEOIC - Medical Health Science Unit

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Lesson Objectives

- Describe professional expertise within Medical Health Science Unit
- Provide insights into the work of the DEEOIC Industrial Hygienists and Nurse Consultants





DEEOIC Professional Experts

- Health Physicist – evaluates occupational radiation exposure and application of the dose reconstruction methodology
- Industrial Hygienist – assesses extent, nature and duration of chemical or biological exposure in an occupational setting
- Toxicologist – analyzes data and literature relating to the relationship between toxic substance exposure and disease
- Registered Nurse – provides medical input on the establishment of medical necessity for requested ancillary medical benefits such as home health care and durable medical equipment



Role and Function of Medical Health Science Experts

- Evaluation of case-specific referrals to offer expert written advice to claims staff responsible for decision-making
 - Provide professional input a case adjudicator can “weigh” in comparison to other available case evidence
 - Help direct the course of development
 - Respond to claimant questions or input
 - MHSU experts DO NOT decide the outcome of claims
- Research and analysis of relevant subject matter to support development of program policies and procedure



Health Physicists

- Professional experts in evaluating occupational radiation data in application to DEEOIC claim adjudication process
- Evaluate case-specific referrals to provide consultative advice
 - Reworks of dose reconstructions (DR)
 - Final Adjudication Branch (FAB) technical reviews of DR objections
 - Technical evaluations for reopening requests from Policy units
 - Part E health physics evaluations, including dose estimates for non-cancer diagnoses
- Facilitate engagement with National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
 - Special Exposure Cohort (SEC) class designation
 - Program Evaluation Report
 - Program Evaluation Plan
 - Case adjudication assistance



Industrial Hygienists

- Professional experts in assessing the extent and duration of occupational exposure to toxic substances including biological or chemical materials
- Evaluate case-specific situations to characterize exposure to toxic substances in the absence of specific employer-generated monitoring data
 - DEEOIC uses the services of both federal and contractor Industrial Hygienists to assess employee toxic substance exposures
- Industrial hygiene reports are exposure assessments, which describe claimant's exposures at DOE sites in terms of significance. Reports are intended to be as claimant favorable as possible.
 - Significant exposures are described in terms of low, moderate or high and assigned frequencies such as daily, weekly, biweekly, or monthly
 - Incidental exposures refer to exposures that occur in passing only



Toxicologists

- Professional experts in evaluating epidemiological and other scientific data to determine if sufficient scientific basis exists to establish that exposure to a toxin can be found to cause disease
- Conduct research and review published scientific journal articles to determine their applicability to the administration of the DEEOIC
 - Provide analysis and opinion on the establishment of health effects due to occupational exposure
 - Provide analysis and opinion regarding causative thresholds such as latency, routes of exposure, and permissible/acceptable levels of exposure to toxic substances with known health effects
 - Determine if individual claim evidence should be applied broadly as programmatic guidance
- Review case-specific issues when the claimant submits scientific health effect documentation that is not validated by available program resources (e.g., SEM)



Registered Nurses

- Professional expert in the field of skilled nursing including those functions relating to the provision of medically necessary services and equipment needed to manage disease
- Apply knowledge and experience in evaluating medical records to provide Medical Benefit Adjudicators interpretive advice regarding requested ancillary medical benefits
 - Diagnostic test findings
 - Medical terminology
 - Plan of care/letter of medical necessity
 - In-home health care, assisted living, and hospice
 - Auto/home modification
 - Ancillary medical services
 - Durable medical equipment (DME)
 - Medical billing and treatment modalities



DEEOIC – Industrial Hygiene and Nurse Consultant Staffing and Organization

- Medical Health Science Unit (MHSU) employs
 - Two full time Certified Industrial Hygienists (CIH)
 - Contractor Certified Industrial Hygienists
 - Four full time Registered Nurses (RN)
- Organization
 - Members of the National Office Branch of Policy, Regulations & Procedures
 - Certified Industrial Hygienists and Registered Nurses report to the MHSU Supervisor



Industrial Hygienist Claim Functions

- Prepare written reports that respond to exposure questions from claim adjudication staff
 - Assesses evidence obtained from development including OHQ, employment data, employee affidavits etc.
 - Apply professional judgment in assessing the extent of exposure from case evidence
 - Opinion carries scientific “weight” in assessing extent-duration-frequency of exposure
- Exposure analysis provided to physician to allow for accurate understanding of exposure for causation opinion



Staff Referrals to Industrial Hygienist

- Referral packages contain following documents-
 - Statement of Accepted Facts
 - Exposure analysis worksheet
 - IH referral form
 - SEM Search Results
 - EE-3 Employment History Form
 - Occupational History Questionnaire
 - Employment Records
 - IH Questions
- Referral Reasons -
 - Identifying chemical or biological toxic substances of greatest relevance to claim
 - Clarify the extent and frequency of exposure given unclear or non-existent exposure data regarding employee contact with specific substances
 - Evaluate objections or other technical issues involving exposure characterization



Industrial Hygiene Reports

- 2,556 IH reports completed in FY 2021
- The major components of reports
 - Issues for Determination
 - Background (employment and medical condition)
 - Discussion
 - Description of likely use of biological or chemical materials
 - Significance, i.e., exposure frequency and level
 - Conclusion
- Once completed report becomes part of permanent case record and may apply to future claims connected to employee



Industrial Hygiene Team Suggestions and Comments

- Provide good, detailed responses to OHQ.
 - Describe the use of particular toxins during day-to-day work activities
- Presence in a work site does not mean significant exposure is presumed – must document how an employee potentially encountered or worked directly with a toxic substance
- Opinions represent reasonable estimate of exposure by a professional; it is left to a physician or established DEEOIC causation presumptions to decide if that exposure resulted in an illness
- IHs can reconsider exposure data when presented with clear, objective evidence of exposures beyond those reported



Nurse Consultants Functions

- Prepare written consultative reports that respond to medical benefit questions from claims adjudication staff
- Uses professional judgment in assessing the clinical case evidence for requests for care and services required to treat or manage accepted medical condition(s)
 - Operates and applies standards relating to the professional practice of nursing
- Written nurse consultation opinions represent a professional assessment of available objective evidence
 - Claim adjudicators weigh Nurse Consultant input to decide if medical evidence aligns reasonably to support a physician request for medical benefits



Reasons for Nurse Referral

- Medical evidence does not provide justification of need for a medical item or service to treat accepted illness
- Contradictory information about effect of accepted illness requiring medical intervention or assistance
 - Medical evidence infers medical need unrelated to accepted condition
 - Objective data conflicts with rationale provided for requested medical benefit
 - Request does not seem to conform to usual standard of care or treatment
- Communicate standard practice of nursing for home and residential health care requests
 - Typical scope of necessary services
 - Types of needed professional support – skilled or unskilled
 - Expected duration or frequency of service visits
 - Handling unusual or vague justification for services



Nurse Consultant Reports – Responding to Medical Referrals

- Summarize Incoming Referral Topic
- Describe Claim Background
 - Accepted Conditions
 - Comorbid Conditions
 - Available clinical data
- Comparative analysis of objective evidence and physician rationale for requested medical benefits
 - Aligns reasonably with available clinical and diagnostic evidence
 - Conforms to usual and customary industry medical standards
- Conclusion that request is supported reasonably or additional development should be considered



Recommendations from the Nurse Team

- Engage with prescribing physician to obtain written justification for services or assistive devices that aligns reasonably with information about medical need. Physician opinion should consider objective data to support an opinion –
 - Treatment or assessment records
 - Therapeutic service reports
 - Home nursing service notes
 - Diagnostic or evaluation data
- Connect need for services to the **accepted work related** conditions
- For Home and Residential Health Care Request –
 - Physician must explain the service justification for a skilled nurse vs. unskilled home health aid (or similar). Must adhere to usual and customary industry nursing standards for providing medically necessary services.
 - Requests for an increased level of home care must be documented objectively by a change in the claimant's medical condition or living circumstance



Questions



Questions can also be submitted to DEEOIC-Outreach@dol.gov

Thank you very much for attending the DEEOIC Webinar