

Recommendation #5, April 2017

Science and Technical Capacity in EEOICP

The Board recommended that the DEEOICP enhance its scientific and technical capabilities to address selected gaps in current capacity, namely, to implement the recommendations developed in the 2013 IOM report on the SEM; to update and keep current the exposure-disease links based originally on Haz-Map in the SEM; to ensure that that program policies reflect state-of-the-art science; and to address the continuing challenge of evaluating claims for diseases for which knowledge is actively evolving. The Board acknowledges the current in-house and contracted expertise that OWCP has at present in the EEOICP. However, the issues that the IOM report raised remain relevant, and the problems that the Board itself has identified in its work on selected issues such as occupational asthma, asbestos-related diseases, occupational hearing loss, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, illustrate that OWCP needs additional organizational expertise in disease causation, epidemiology, and occupational medicine that can participate in the OWCP on a sustained and regular basis. The Board remains willing to assist on an ad hoc and advisory basis, but the program need is too multi-dimensional and ongoing to rely on the Board to fulfill this function.