



JANUARY 2009 NEWSLETTER

IMPORTANT NOTICE RE:GROUP-RATING CHANGES

There are some very significant changes taking place in group-rating for the 2009/2010 policy period that all employers should take note of. At a recent BWC Board Meeting the following changes were adopted by BWC:

- 1) The group-rating deadline has been extended from February 28th to April 24th. BWC has indicated that the additional time is needed to analyze an alternative process for setting premium rates for group-rated employers vs. non-group-rated employers.
- 2) Employers remaining with the same group sponsor (TOCA) are no longer required to submit a new AC-26 form each year.
- 3) Any qualifying employer not included on the group association's roster will not be eligible to participate in group-rating. BWC may waive this rule for "good cause" shown due to clerical or administrative error. Employers not included on the final roster filed by TOCA or do not have an AC-26 form on file will not be considered for the group-rating program.
- 4) Non-group employers will likely receive a 30% reduction in base rates.
- 5) The DFWP and PDP programs discounts may be discontinued. (At the time of publishing this notice – BWC has not made this official.)
- 6) BWC is in the process of developing a new deductible program that will allow employers to pay a portion of the claims cost in return for a discount on premiums charged by BWC.

These changes may significantly impact on group-rating projected discounts for 2009/2010. TOCA & BMSO has already started the process of re-evaluating everyone to determine the impact on all employers. All participants will be notified of changes in their group status.

Regardless of the changes currently taking place at BWC, group-rating is still the most effective cost-saving program that BWC offers. Employers should continue to strive for placement in one of the group programs. Discounts up to 80% may still be achieved for qualifying employers. We encourage all employers to complete an AC-3 form and return

it by fax to TOCA at (330) 609-6000 or from our website at www.tocainc.com. Should you have any questions, please contact Bob Carr at (330) 856-4383.

ADR PROCESS CHANGES

BWC has changed the ADR process to that currently used by BMSO. Alternative Dispute Resolution is a process used by BWC and the MCO to adjudicate differences between the provider/claimant and the BWC/MCO. BWC will now use a two-prong approach to the process:

- 1) An ADR file review is a physician review of medical records in an injured worker's claim which provides an impartial medical opinion regarding disputed medical issues. BWC's ADR Unit uses this opinion to obtain additional medical evidence in an attempt to resolve a dispute.
- 2) An ADR IME (Independent Medical Exam) consists of an evaluation of the injured worker and review of medical records. The IME provides BWC with additional information and/or expert medical opinions used in the management of the claim.

BMSO has always considered the ADR process a dispute between the provider/claimant and the BWC/MCO. Without supporting medical the IC hearing officers normally will validate the BWC/MCO decision based on current BWC rules. Employers who wish to challenge the ADR process will want to ensure that they have their own review or IME completed.

NATURAL GAS SAVINGS PROGRAM FROM TOCA

TOCA has entered into an agreement with a company to take advantage of the natural gas deregulation. This program is being offered to your company and your employees. There are **no contracts** and **no penalties** to use this program. The price for residential gas is at \$8.13 per MCF and as low as \$7.99 for commercial users with 1000 or more MCF annually. Some employers have been able to achieve saving of \$10k annually with this program. If you or your employees would like to utilize this savings program fax a copy of your most recent gas bill to us at (330) 609-6000 for a quote on the savings. It takes about 30 days for a rate change to become effective. The savings are very real. TOCA has been able to save over \$3500 annually on our gas bill.