



19th Annual Medical Conference

Examining the Challenges:
Advancing Medical Management



May 16 - 17, 2019
Helena, MT

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State Fund

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A Note From Our President

Thank you for joining us today. We are proud to present the Montana State Fund 19th Annual Medical Conference, Examining the Challenges: Advancing Medical Management.

Montana State Fund would like to thank our longtime partner, SCL Health for their continued assistance and support of this conference.



We are honored and privileged to have nationally recognized speakers presenting at this year's conference. Our speakers are truly experts in the field of workers' compensation. Their thoughts, perspectives and analyses are shaping the future of disability management and we are fortunate to have them joining us today. Please take an opportunity to welcome them to Montana.

Montana State Fund has sponsored this educational conference for 19 years because we recognize the important role of continuing education in the workers' compensation process. It is crucial that we continue to learn about emerging issues and trends within the industry. By exploring new ideas and thoughts, we can continue to help Montana's injured employees attain optimal outcomes.

Conferences such as this enhance relationships between all stakeholders. These relationships are vital to Montana's injured employees, employers, health care community and economy. Only by working together can we better the workers' compensation system for injured workers, medical providers and employers.

In addition to learning from our speakers, I strongly encourage you to take time today to talk and share experiences and ideas with one another for the betterment of Montana's workers' compensation system.

Again, welcome, and I trust you will enjoy the conference.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. A. Hubbard". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light gray background.

Laurence A. Hubbard
President/CEO

Agenda - Thursday, May 16

7:30a - 4:30p Registration Open

7:30a - 8:30a Breakfast with Exhibitors

8:30a - 9:00a Welcome Address and Opening Statements

Laurence Hubbard, President, Montana State Fund

Paul Gorsuch, M.D., Medical Director, Montana State Fund

9:00a - 10:15a Living Abled and Healthy

Christopher R. Brigham, M.D., Brigham and Associates, Inc.

10:15a - 10:45a Break

10:45a - 11:45a Low Back Pain and Iatrogenic Disability

*Marjorie Eskay-Auerbach, M.D., J.D., Spine Care & Forensic
Medicine, PLLC*

11:45a - 12:45p Lunch and Exhibitor Stroll

12:45p - 2:00p Responsible Opioid Prescribing Does Not Negate
Compassionate Pain Management

*Laura B. Gardner, M.D., MPH, Ph.D., FACPM, Persimmon AI,
Inc.*

2:00p - 2:30p Break

2:30p - 3:45p Injured Public Safety Workers

*Fabrice Czarnecki, M.D., MA, MPH, FACOEM, Transportation
Security Administration*

3:45p - 4:00p Closing Remarks

Paul Gorsuch, M.D., Medical Director, Montana State Fund

4:00p - 6:00p Welcome Reception

Agenda - Friday, May 17

7:30a - 8:30a Breakfast with Exhibitors

8:30a - 8:45a Opening Remarks

Paul Gorsuch, M.D., Medical Director, Montana State Fund

8:45a - 10:00a Empowering Evidence-Based Claims Decisions

*Denise Zoe Algire, MBA, RN, COHN-S/CM, FAAOHN
Albertsons Companies*

10:00a - 11:00a Opioids and Chronic Pain: Where Do We Go From Here?

Craig Sweeney, D.O., Great Falls Clinic

11:00a - 11:30a Break

11:30a - 12:30p Ethical Obligations in Workers' Compensation Claims

Honorable David M. Sandler, Montana Workers' Compensation Court Judge

12:30p - 1:00p Closing Remarks and Prize Drawing

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Email: alynn@pacblu.com

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Email: kjarvis@pacblu.com



Our Speakers

Denise Zoe Algire, MBA, RN, COHN-S/CM, FAAOHN

Ms. Denise Zoe Algire is the Director of Risk Initiatives & National Medical Director for Albertsons Companies. Ms. Algire serves as the principal researcher and report author for the Workers' Compensation Benchmarking studies. She is board certified in occupational and environmental health and is a fellow of the American Association of Occupational & Environmental Health Nurses. Bringing more than 20 years of industry experience, her expertise includes claim operations, medical management, risk management, and health care practice management.

Christopher R. Brigham, M.D.

Dr. Christopher R. Brigham is recognized as a leading international expert on health and disability. He is the author of "Living Abled and Healthy" and President of Brigham and Associates, Inc. Dr. Brigham is Board-Certified in Occupational Medicine (ABPM), Founding Director of the American Board of Independent Medical Examiners (ABIME), a Fellow of the American Academy of Disability Evaluating Physicians (FAADEP), a Fellow of the American College of Occupational Environmental Medicine (FACOEM), and a graduate of the Washington University School of Medicine – St. Louis.

Fabrice Czarnecki, M.D., MA, MPH, FACOEM

Dr. Fabrice Czarnecki is the Chief Medical Officer for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), US Department of Homeland Security. He is the current chair of the Public Safety Section of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM). Dr. Czarnecki is actively involved in writing medical guidelines for safety-sensitive occupations, as vice-chair of the ACOEM Task Group on Medical Guidance for Law Enforcement Officers, and as chair of the 1582 Task Group of the National Fire Protection Association (2018 cycle). He is board-certified in family medicine and emergency medicine.

Our Speakers

Marjorie Eskay-Auerbach, M.D., JD

Dr. Marjorie Eskay-Auerbach is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon, board certified spine surgeon and medical legal consultant with a special interest in spine care. Dr. Eskay-Auerbach attended the University of Arizona Law School, after which she resumed her medical practice with a focus on medical legal issues. Her current clinical practice focuses on nonoperative care and medical pain management of patients with neck and back problems. She performs medical legal consultation, independent medical evaluations and records reviews and provides expert opinions and testimony.

Laura B. Gardner, M.D., MPH, Ph.D, FACPM

Dr. Laura Gardner is Founder and CEO of Persimmon AI, a fledgling startup at the intersection of healthcare and insurtech. Prior to founding Persimmon AI, Dr. Gardner was President and Medical Director of Axiomedics Research, Inc., a research, consulting and software development firm founded in 1994 with a focus on predictive modeling of health outcomes. Dr. Gardner earned her Bachelor's degree in Biology from Brandeis University, her M.D. from Albert Einstein College of Medicine and both an M.P.H. in health policy and a Ph.D. in health economics from the University of California at Berkeley. She is Board Certified in General Preventive Medicine and Public Health and is a Fellow of the American College of Preventive Medicine.

Paul Gorsuch, M.D.

Dr. Paul Gorsuch is a Fellow of the American Academy of Neurosurgeons with over 33 years of experience in treatment of spine and cranial injuries and conditions. Dr. Gorsuch is practicing at the Billings Clinic in Billings, Montana and serves as Montana State Fund's Medical Director.



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Our Speakers

Hon. David Sandler, Workers' Compensation Court Judge

Judge David M. Sandler was appointed as Workers' Compensation Court Judge by Governor Steve Bullock on August 20, 2014. Judge Sandler received his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Montana School of Law in Missoula in 1998. Judge Sandler's law practice included insurance defense of workers' compensation claims from 1999 to 2006 and from 2007 through his appointment to the Court, a portion of his practice was representing claimants' workers' compensation claims.

Craig Sweeney D.O.

Dr. Craig Sweeney was born and raised in Northwest Montana. His education and training in Microbiology and Medical Technology took him to Spokane, Washington before moving to the Midwest for medical training and fellowship. Currently practicing in Great Falls Montana, Dr. Sweeney has found both support and a solid practice over the past five years in his practice of anesthesiology and chronic pain.

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John A. Vallin MD, FAAPM&R

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Montana State Fund Medical Services Team

Sam Heigh, Vice President Insurance Operations Support

Sam Heigh serves as Vice President of Operations Support, where she oversees the Medical, Claim Quality Assurance, Underwriting Services and Training teams. She holds degrees and certifications in business administration, criminal justice and project management as well as an Associate in Claims from the Insurance Institute of America. Ms. Heigh is a native of Helena, Montana, and with her husband owns a nonprofit business that provides search dog teams to a number of sheriff's departments and search and rescue organizations across the state to locate and recover lost persons.

Michele Fairclough, Medical Services Director

Michele Fairclough is the Medical Services Director at Montana State Fund and provides leadership and direction for Montana State Fund medical services and medical cost containment programs. Ms. Fairclough has more than 25 years of experience in the workers' compensation industry. She has been with Montana State Fund for over 10 years and has worked in various positions, from Claims Examiner to Provider Relations Specialist. Ms. Fairclough is a native of Helena. She graduated from Capital High School and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Carroll College.

Shannon Hadley, Provider Relations Specialist

Shannon Hadley began her career at Montana State Fund in 1997. She served as a Claims Examiner for 18 years, until 2014 when she took the position of a Claims Quality Assurance specialist for the Claims Team. Ms. Hadley joined the medical team as the Provider Relations Specialist in 2016. This position allows Ms. Hadley to interact with the medical community, which she thoroughly enjoys. She received her Bachelor of Science in Sports Medicine / Pre-Physical Therapy from Montana State University.



Montana State Fund has teamed up with WorkCompEDI to give participating providers several flexible bill submission methods. Find out more at:

workcompedi.com/montanastatefund/




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Certified Claims Examiners must sign in for each session that will be claimed for credits.

Licensed Claim Adjusters must sign in for every session to receive any credits.

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See you next year!

Montana State Fund's
20th Annual Medical Conference
May 7 - 8, 2020
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