

# The *INNOVATOR*



MANAGED PHARMACY PROGRAMS... MANAGED BETTER

On July 1, 2021, MCI partnered with Alius Health for pharmacy benefit management (PBM) services for injured workers. Alius Health’s focus on patient care, customer service, technology and savings ultimately led us to make this change and results fiscal year-to-date have not disappointed. Below are some key performance measures through the third quarter of fiscal year 2022:

- ◇ Generic dispensing ratio of 88.3%; only 3.33% brand-dispensed with generic available.
- ◇ Total prescription counts of 16,678 compared to 19,526 for the same time period the prior fiscal year.
- ◇ Total spend of \$2,882,961 compared to \$3,642,405 the prior year.
- ◇ Network savings of \$4,118,547 compared to \$3,029,673.
- ◇ Average cost per script decreased by roughly 8%.

Our improved results are primarily achieved as a result of enhanced formulary management, near real-time feedback to prescribers on medication management, clinical expertise and transparent pricing with Alius Health.

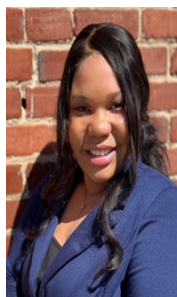
## NEW Program Employees & Promotions

There are some new “virtual” faces working for the program’s claim service provider. See their introductions below:



**Ashanti Mason Nichols** – I am a lover of food. I come from dual cultural, Caribbean and Hispanic household, where the kitchen is the heart of the home. When time presents itself you will find me concocting a new recipe for the family to try. If I’m not in the kitchen, you can catch me out on the ballfield cheering on my daughter’s softball team or son’s baseball team. Go Honeybees! Go Lancers!

Ashanti is our newest Claim Supervisor.



**Kelli Ferrell** – In my spare time I enjoy checking out local restaurants, going on adventures with friends and family, and love a great thrill, such as amusement parks, and am planning to go skydiving this summer!

Kelli is a Claims Associate and will be working with the team to learn about the entire claim process.



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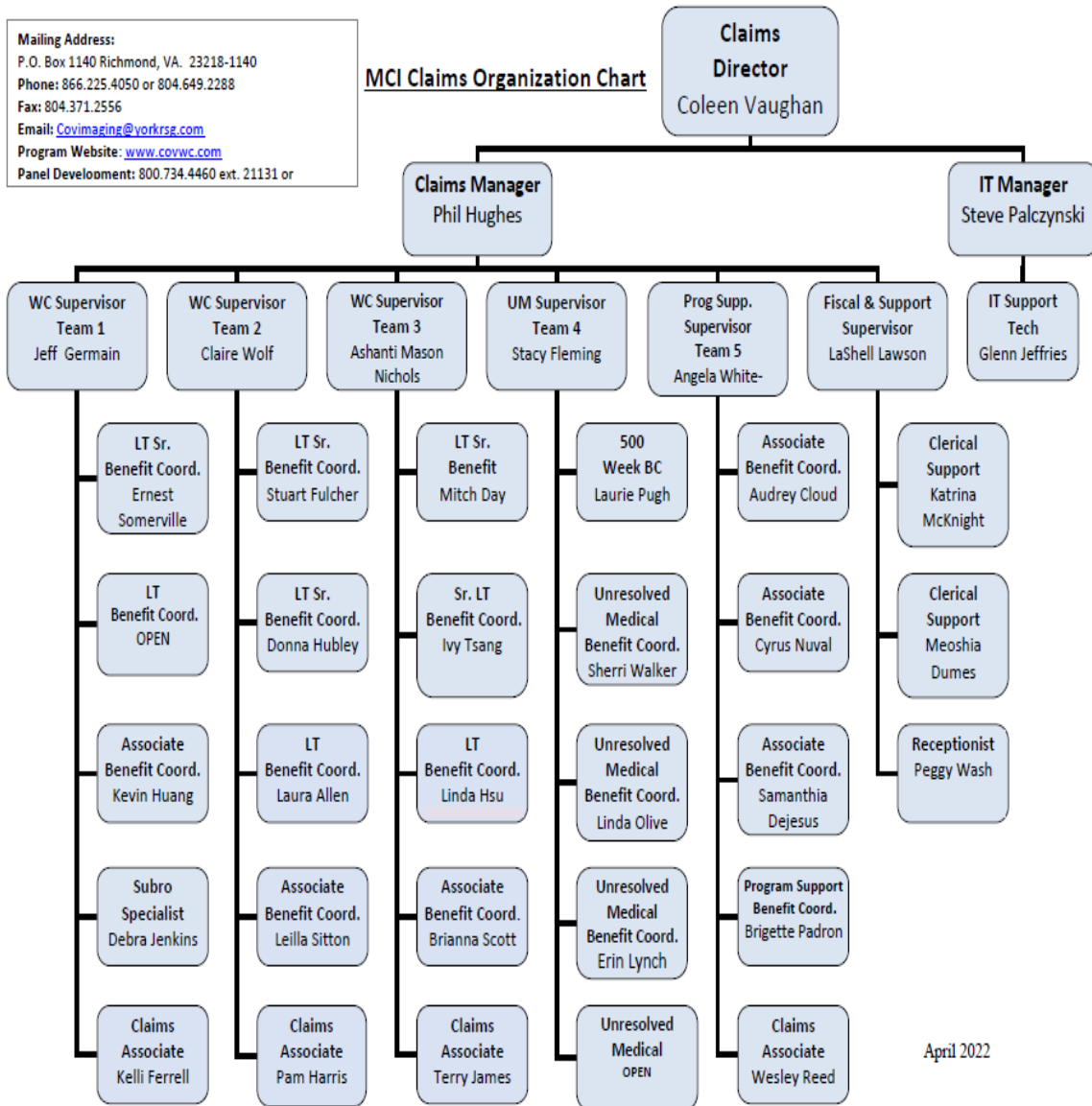
(New Program Employees & Promotions-continued from page 1)



Congratulations are in order for Stacy Fleming and Brianna Scott. Both were promoted recently. Stacy Fleming was promoted to Claim Supervisor for the unresolved medical team, while Brianna was promoted from Claims Associate to Associate Benefit Coordinator. In her new role Brianna will be investigating questionable medical-only claims.



Below is the current organizational chart for our program's claim service provider.



April 2022

## Dealing with Stress

April was National Stress Awareness Month. The purpose is to bring awareness of the effects of stress overload and urge people to seek helpful approaches for reducing and dealing with stress.

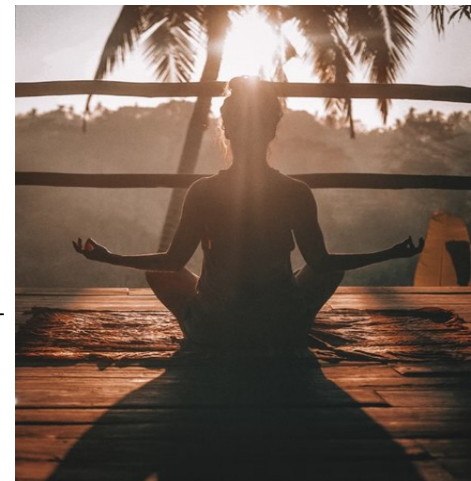
You may develop some of the health symptoms listed below from being overly stressed at home or work:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Trouble concentrating
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Changes in appetite
- Headaches
- Jaw pain

Not only has it been proven that stress negatively impacts your overall health and well-being, but it can also turn into difficulties at work—such as lower job performance, increased absenteeism, turnover rates, and a greater likelihood of an on-the-job accident.

According to the [American Anxiety & Depression Association of America \(AADA\)](#), the following tips may help people dealing with stress:

- Take a time-out. Stepping back from the problem helps clear your head. Practice yoga, listen to music, meditate, get a massage, or learn relaxation techniques.
- Eat well-balanced meals. Do not skip any meals. Do keep healthful, energy-boosting snacks on hand.
- Limit alcohol and caffeine, which can aggravate anxiety and trigger panic attacks.
- Get enough sleep. When stressed, your body needs extra sleep and rest.
- Exercise daily to help you feel good and maintain your health. Check out the fitness tips below.
- Take deep breaths. Inhale and exhale slowly.
- Count to 10 slowly. Repeat, and count to 20 if necessary.
- Do your best. Instead of aiming for perfection, which isn't possible, be proud of however close you get.
- Accept that you cannot control everything. Put your stress in perspective: Is it really as bad as you think?
  - Welcome humor. A good laugh goes a long way.
  - Maintain a positive attitude. Make an effort to replace negative thoughts with positive ones.
  - Get involved. Volunteer or find another way to be active in your community, which creates a support network and gives you a break from everyday stress.
  - Learn what triggers your anxiety. Is it work, family, school, or something else you can identify? When you're feeling stressed or anxious, write in a journal and look for a pattern.
  - Talk to someone. Tell friends and family you're feeling overwhelmed, and let them know how they can help you.
  - Talk to a physician or therapist for professional help if necessary.



*(Dealing with Stress- continued from page 3)*

Bottom line: Don't let stress control your life, get help if you need it!

Photos/ References:

<https://unsplash.com/photos/2Ts5HnA67k8>

[https://unsplash.com/photos/NTyBbu66\\_SI](https://unsplash.com/photos/NTyBbu66_SI)

<https://unsplash.com/photos/CwTBt6jyagQ>

<https://adaa.org/tips>

## Panel of Physicians

One of the most important steps in the management of a workers' compensation claim is the offering of a panel of physicians to an injured worker. However, the development of an effective panel of physicians starts long before an accident occurs.

Agencies are encouraged, but not required, to develop panels from the approved network. We recognize that you may have better knowledge of and relationships with physicians in your community. The important thing is they will work with you on seeing injured workers timely, providing appropriate treatment and returning employees to work when medically appropriate. Ideally, the appropriate agency representative meets with physicians you are considering for inclusion on your panel. You will want to educate them on your work environment and facilities, opportunities for modified duty, your preferences on the frequency of communication and your overall interest in your employees' outcomes.

Panel MUSTS:

- Provide a choice of at least three qualified physicians.
- Physicians must be a reasonable distance from the injured worker's residence (within 50-mile range).
- Physicians must be from three separate practices.
- Panel includes names of doctors, NOT just the name of the practices. Also include complete address and telephone numbers for the physicians.

Please refer to our [How to Develop a Panel of Physicians](#) guide for more information.

If you want help in establishing a panel, Client Services can help! They will search the network and make calls to confirm contact information and verify that the provider is accepting workers' compensation and new patients. If there aren't 3 physicians close enough to your location within the network, they will search outside of the network. If you have any special requirements or questions you want them to confirm, let them know. If you want to make them aware of physicians you want to include, you can do that as well. Client Services can be reached at:

Email – [ClientServices@careworks.com](mailto:ClientServices@careworks.com)

Phone - 800.734.4460 option 1

Client Services is staffed Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CST.

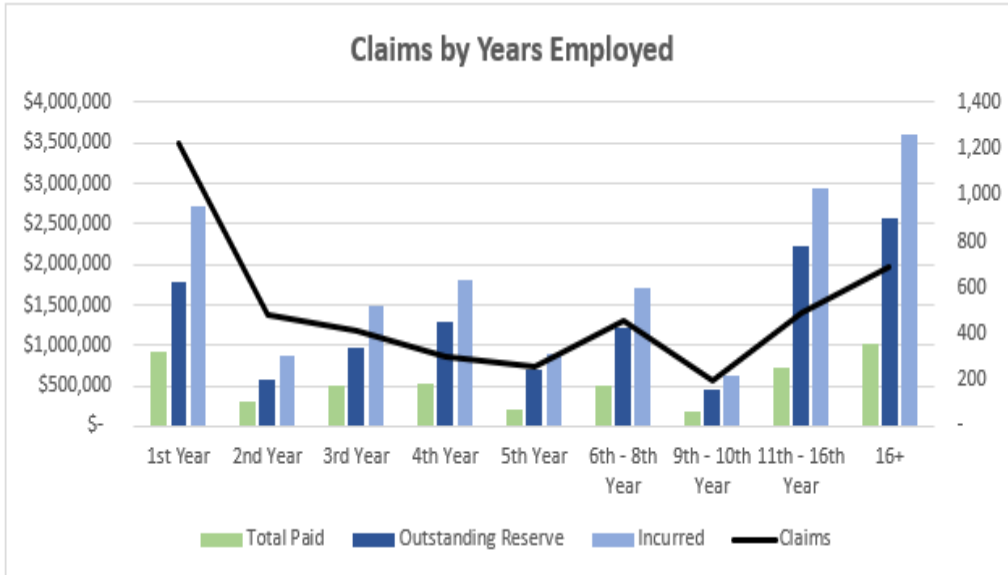
You may also contact your assigned Office of Workers' Compensation Agency Relations Representative for assistance.



## Injuries and Length of Service

According to research provided by Travelers, new employees get injured more often than their more-experienced coworkers. According to the data, roughly a third of injuries happen to workers with less than a year on the job. Newer workers are less experienced, have less training and are likely younger.

How do losses for the Commonwealth of Virginia compare? In fiscal year 2022, 27% of all losses happened to workers within the first year of employment. Those injuries account for 16% of the total incurred value. See the chart below for further injury-length of employment information.



Due to increased employee turnover, more workers will likely fall into the category of having worked for your agency less than one year. This suggests that the program may see a spike in injuries toward the end of this calendar year and into 2023. Be vigilant in providing newer employees with adequate training.

## Loss Control Update

LCI and DHRM just finished the second round of their workplace safety Special Emphasis Program addressing workplace safety issues. Ergonomics was the topic this round. LCI and the COV’s Safety Specialist Johnny Nugent developed five different ergo educational fliers and five workstation set-up videos for agency employees. LCI also completed several Ergonomic “Find it, Fix it” site visit walkthroughs for agencies wanting help. Be on the lookout for the next topic coming soon.

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Got ideas  
 for the  
 newsletter?

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## Phone calls, emails...OH MY!

You're busy, the MCI staff is busy; let's face it we are all busy! When we are busy, it may be easy to lose sight of the fact that an injured worker is waiting for a decision on a claim and for covered services to be authorized.

Receipt of a new claim starts the clock for the assigned MCI Benefit Coordinator's claim investigation and management. In the course of receiving and reviewing claim information, the benefit coordinator (BC) is required, by contract, to make initial contact attempts with the appropriate agency representative, on lost time and questionable medical-only claims at least 3 times over a 7-day period. This discussion and exchange of information is a critical component of the claim decision process. The BC should be confirming the facts surrounding the accident, obtaining work status information and requesting any follow-up documentation or items needed. The quicker actual contact is made and information is gathered, the quicker your employees receive claim disposition information.

Through March of this fiscal year we made compensability decisions on 2,165 claims with an average compensability turnaround time of 11 days. Your participation in the investigation process has greatly contributed to these excellent results!

## Key Metrics

With the close of another quarter comes the analysis of various key program metrics. The table below compares results through three quarters of the most recent fiscal years.

Metrics	FY22	FY21	FY20
# Claims Received	4,280	3,767	4,972
- Indemnity	371	309	376
- Medical Only	1,719	1,756	2,336
- Record Only	2,190	1,702	2,260
Closing Ratio	100.57	100.60	100.58
# of Compensability Decisions	2,165	2,178	2,831
Ave. Compensability Decision Lagtime (days)	11	10.67	9.11
# Medical Bills Paid	27,966	30,107	36,256
\$ Medical Bills Paid	\$16.653m	\$17.546m	\$20.744m
Cost Avoidance	\$10.174m	\$12.485m	\$14.4m
Ave. Medical Bill Payment Turnaround Time (days)	6.1	7	9.3
% Claims Reported to MCI within 10 Days	81.1%	87.1%	85.2%