

Alaska Division of Workers' Compensation Medical Services Review Committee Meeting Minutes

August 8, 2025

Friday, August 8, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

Director Charles Collins called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Participation was via video conference and in-person in Anchorage, Alaska.

II. ROLL CALL

The following Members were present:

Dr. Mary Ann Foland	Jeff Gilbert	Susan Kosinski	Mason McCloskey
Valerie Mittelstead	Pam Scott	Misty Steed	

Member Jeff Moore was excused; a quorum was established.

III. APPROVAL OF JULY 18, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

Member Foland moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Member Gilbert. Member Steed noted there was also a discussion regarding long-term inpatient care and the PC Pricer tool that were not included in the minutes. The minutes were adopted without objection.

IV. FEE SCHEDULE DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION

Carla stepped through the final draft of the 2026 Fee Schedule. Carla presented two wording options regarding EMEs and SIMEs. After review, the committee unanimously agreed to adopt the first option.

The Committee discussed Home Health. The definition of “qualified provider” was clarified, drawing a clear distinction between skilled medical services billed under the fee schedule, and unskilled or custodial services—such as personal care attendants and companion care—reimbursed separately by agreement between payer and provider. They agreed to remove the “are delivered by qualified providers” bullet, add subheadings distinguishing “Reimbursement by Agreement” and “Reimbursement by Fee Schedule,” and include explicit examples of qualified providers in the fee schedule section. To avoid ambiguity, “shall be” will replace “may be” when describing applicability of the fee schedule. The current reimbursement rate of 85% of the MAR for skilled services will remain unchanged.

The committee discussed inpatient rehabilitation. Carla reported that NCCI data was very limited, with only two or three cases in five years, and outlined other states’ approaches, including CMS pricer multipliers, flat per diems, CMG-based schedules, and percentage-of-charge models. Alaska currently reimburses at 100% of billed charges. Members questioned whether overpayment was occurring and agreed more data is needed before considering changes. Misty Steed, Jeff Gilbert, and Charles Collins will gather information from self-insureds, state risk management, and other payers; Carla will research historical data; and Jeff Gilbert will draft potential structural options. The matter was tabled pending further information.

The committee addressed ambulance services. Current payments are 85% of billed charges, with frequent use of HCPCS code A0427 for a base rate (commonly billed at approximately \$2,245, compared to Medicare's \$279) and A0425 for mileage (about \$52 per mile billed, compared to Medicare's \$9 per mile). Some providers are also using non-standard codes such as A0800 for after-hours surcharges, which do not exist in the standard CPT/HCPCS code set. Concerns were raised about the lack of an adopted ambulance fee schedule, which allows creation of unregulated codes. Potential solutions included adopting the Medicare ground ambulance schedule with a multiplier, eliminating separate after-hours surcharges, and clarifying non-billable codes. As adoption would require a regulation change under 8 AAC 45.083, the committee may recommend board action. Nan Orme will draft after-hours language, and Carla Gee will review CMS adoption processes for possible integration.

Break 10:07 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: 10:15 AM- 11:15 AM

- Trudy Sobacinski, Green Acres LLC
 - Unable to locate personal care services rates in the published fee schedule; sought clarification on HCPCS code T1019 (personal care services) referenced in 2022 minutes at \$315.86 per unit. Asked what does “unit” mean in this context?
 - Committee members responded code T1019 is not valued in Medicare’s fee schedule; would default to 85% of billed charges. Skilled nursing is covered under the fee schedule; non-skilled/home attendant care (including family members) is reimbursed at negotiated rates. Director Collins and Carla Gee will provide a formal response to Ms. Sobcinski.
- Kayla McCain, Vice President of the Pacific Northwest for ExamWorks
 - Concern over potential implementation of a fee schedule for Alaska IMEs, noting that only one IME is allowed per claim, making provider quality essential. Explained that Alaska’s limited pool of local IME doctors often requires bringing in fellowship-trained, experienced specialists from out of state, which adds significant travel costs. Because the distance and time away from active practices make recruitment challenging, she stressed that fees must remain competitive. McCain added that existing market competition already keeps rates in check, ExamWorks has not increased Alaska IME rates in years, and the company declines to work with doctors who raise their fees.

VI. FEE SCHEDULE DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION CONTINUED

The committee reviewed the remaining updates to the draft fee schedule, noting the need to integrate the most recent CMS updates and maintain consistency with adopted multipliers. Carla Gee confirmed that the updated files had been posted and that no major structural changes were proposed beyond the annual CMS adjustments.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Director Collins reminded the Committee that the Joint MSRC-WC Board meeting is scheduled for August 22, 2025.

Motion to adjourn by Member McClosky, seconded by Member Foland. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 11:19 a.m.