

Workers' Compensation Legal Update

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New American College of Physicians Proposed Guidelines for Treatment of Low Back Pain

In the insurance world, we often encounter cases involving complaints of lower back pain. Back pain cases can involve a lot of uncertainty about how long the pain will last and how severe the underlying issue might become. According to a report that accompanies new proposed treatment guidelines, lower back pain cases often involve prescription drugs, scans and injections as a treating physician's first line of defense, and these treatments tend to provide limited benefits at a high cost.

However, this situation may be on the mend. This month, the American College of Physicians released new proposed guidelines for physicians treating lower back pain. The gist? Start with simple, non-pharmacological therapies first.

Even for patients with long-term lower back pain lasting upwards of twelve weeks, these new guidelines suggest starting with alternative therapies. Aspirin, physical therapy and even just encouraging a patient to go about his or her normal routine are all recommended under the new guidelines as the first steps to recovery. The guidelines even suggest that no doctor visit is necessary for back pain that doesn't radiate down the leg, and that doctors should favor alternative therapies like acupuncture, exercise, massage therapy and yoga before turning to anti-inflammatories, opioids and steroid injections. The new proposed guidelines are a move away from prescription medication, opioids in particular.

The new proposed guidelines show that the medical establishment might be trending away from the scan and prescribe mindset towards therapies that are more beneficial to patients, physicians and the insurers who pay the bills.

The full proposal is accessible [here](#).

If you have questions involving cases with complaints of lower back pain, contact one of MGC's [workers' compensation attorneys](#).

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