

## Acupuncture Pilot Project Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the L&I Acupuncture Pilot Project?

- a. The Acupuncture Pilot Project will collect information to inform the provision of acupuncture treatment for low back pain, including acupuncture provided by East Asian Medicine Practitioners (EAMPs), to injured or ill workers covered by Washington's workers' compensation system. This project provides a structured environment for care delivery and capture of data that will inform future L&I coverage and payment methodology for acupuncture. While the project is underway, the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) will pay qualified providers participating in the pilot project to deliver acupuncture treatment to injured workers with low back pain related to an accepted condition on an open workers' compensation claim.

### 2. Why is L&I conducting an Acupuncture Pilot Program?

- a. L&I has current administrative rules ([WAC 296-20-03002](#), [WAC 296-20-01505](#)) prohibiting acupuncture as a treatment for work related injury or illness and prohibiting "acupuncturists" (now known as EAMPs) from billing or treating injured workers. After a request for coverage and submission of clinical evidence, L&I reviewed the available medical literature and concluded there is evidence of the effectiveness of acupuncture for treating low back pain. L&I worked with its Industrial Insurance Medical Advisory Committee (IIMAC) and decided, based on evidence and feedback, to proceed with a pilot project. The pilot waives existing rules and gathers information to help L&I determine how best to implement and cover acupuncture treatment, and acupuncture providers, within a workers' compensation system where treatment must focus on recovery from workplace injury, functional improvement, and return to work.

### 3. How can I participate in the pilot?

- a. As of August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017, L&I has enrolled the maximum number of providers for the duration of the pilot program. No further applications will be accepted or considered.

### 4. How long will the pilot run?

- a. The pilot will run for up to two years, from 2017 to 2019.

### 5. How can I stay informed about the pilot?

- a. Visit the [acupuncture pilot webpage](#)
- b. Subscribe to the [acupuncture pilot project LISTSERV](#)



#### 6. Can all injured workers receive acupuncture treatment?

No, the following conditions must be met in order for an injured worker to receive acupuncture treatment.

1. The treatment must be for low back pain related to an accepted condition on an open workers' compensation claim.
2. The acupuncture treatment will be reimbursed only when referred by the worker's attending provider.

Please note, **self-insured employers are not required to participate in the pilot or cover acupuncture treatment during the pilot**, though they may choose to cover acupuncture under the terms of the pilot. The patient and provider should ensure participation of the self-insured employer prior to initiating acupuncture treatment.

Claim contact information for self-insured employers is available at:

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/ClaimsIns/Insurance/SelfInsure/EmpList/Default.asp>

#### 7. How do you identify if a claim is for a self-insured employer?

- a. The claim number will begin with a S, T, or W.

**Note:** if the claimant works for a self-insured employer you must contact the employer to verify participation in the acupuncture pilot program. **For a list of self-insured employers and their contact information please visit: [Find Self-Insured Employers](#)**

#### 8. What kinds of services are covered in the pilot program?

- a. Acupuncture treatment, for low back pain related to an accepted condition on a workers' compensation claim only, is covered up to a maximum of 10 visits per injured worker's claim. Providers are expected to continue treatment only if clinically meaningful improvement is documented midway through treatment. **Only the medically necessary number of acupuncture treatments should be provided.**
- b. Other treatment modalities within EAMPs' scope of practice are **not covered under this pilot**, and will not be separately reimbursed. Please note that to provide acupuncture, you must accept L&I's payment as sole and complete remuneration for services provided to the worker as required by Washington State law (no balance-billing is allowed).

#### 9. If I am accepted into the pilot, when can I start treating injured workers?

If your application is accepted and approved by L&I, you may begin providing acupuncture treatment to injured workers under the terms and conditions of the pilot project on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

#### 10. Am I required to get pre-authorization for acupuncture treatment?

- a. No, pre-authorization is not required, though appropriate documentation of the referral and the treatment provided is mandatory.



### 11. Who can refer injured workers for acupuncture treatment?

- a. The referring provider must be the claimant's attending provider
- b. Per [WAC 296-20-01002](#), members of the provider network include Physicians, Chiropractors, Naturopathic physicians, Podiatric physicians, Advanced registered nurse practitioners, Physician assistants, Dentists, and Optometrists.

### 12. What kind of documentation is required for the pilot?

L&I requires documentation of the clinical encounter to support claim adjudication and payment. After each treatment, all supporting clinical documentation must be sent to L&I via:

- Fax : 360-902-4567
- OR
- Mail: Department of Labor & Industries  
PO Box 44291  
Olympia, WA 98504-4291

In addition, an [Oswestry Disability Index \(ODI\)](#) assessment and [2-item Graded Chronic Pain Scale \(GCPS\)](#) form must be completed and sent to the department, *in electronic format*, at least on the following visits:

- a. Initial office visit, and
- b. Mid treatment, or the fifth treatment if reached, and
- c. Final treatment.

These forms must be sent to [acupuncturepilot@lni.wa.gov](mailto:acupuncturepilot@lni.wa.gov)

The final treatment data must also include the reason for discharge from acupuncture treatment (e.g. maximum number of treatments used, treatment no longer medically necessary, goals met, patient discontinued). Reports and chart notes must also be submitted separately from bills.

### 13. How do I find a participating acupuncture provider?

- a. Please utilize the "Search for a Doctor or Provider" tool located [here](#). To use the search engine, look under "all providers," and select "acupuncturist" under the specialist type (on the left side of the screen) to locate an enrolled acupuncture provider in the area of interest.

### 14. If I have any questions not answered here, who can I contact?

- a. For questions related to your provider account, contact Provider Accounts and Credentialing at [pacmail@lni.wa.gov](mailto:pacmail@lni.wa.gov). Please contact the Provider Hotline at (800) 848-0811 for any other assistance.