



NORTH CAROLINA INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION

May 2021 Quarterly Update

Deputy Commissioner Appointments

- Celeste M. Harris has been appointed to serve a six-year term as a Deputy Commissioner assigned to the Commission's Winston-Salem regional office. Harris brings extensive relevant experience to the Commission, having represented individuals for 30 years in the areas of workers' compensation, personal injury, and social security disability law. She is a North Carolina State Bar Board Certified Specialist in workers' compensation law and a North Carolina Certified Mediator. Prior to practicing law, Harris worked as a registered nurse in the surgical ICU for a Veteran's Administration hospital in Missouri, first as a staff nurse and later as head nurse. She earned her law degree from Saint Louis University School of Law, attending Wake Forest University School of Law during her third-year.

- Wes Saunders has been appointed to serve a six-year term as a Deputy Commissioner assigned to the Commission's Raleigh office. Saunders has significant workers' compensation litigation experience, having defended State agencies for over five years in hundreds of workers' compensation cases while serving as an Assistant Attorney General at the North Carolina Department of Justice. He also has appellate court experience, representing the State in over a dozen cases before the North Carolina Court of Appeals and Supreme Court. Saunders earned his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and his law degree from Campbell University School of Law, where he served as Student Bar Association President.

Full Commission and General / Administrative Updates

- A notice of proposed rulemaking by the Commission was published in the April 15, 2021 North Carolina Register regarding the proposed permanent adoption of Rule 11 NCAC 23E .0302, which allows the Commission to waive or modify the provisions of any of its rules to bring its rules in conformity with an emergency Order or directive of the Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court in the

interests of justice or to protect public health or safety. A public hearing on the proposed permanent rule will be held on June 10, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. via teleconference only (teleconference number: 1-888-363-4735, access code: 4465746). Written comments on the proposed permanent rule may be submitted through June 14, 2021 to Gina Cammarano, Rulemaking Coordinator (please email comments to gina.cammarano@ic.nc.gov, if at all possible).

- The Commission's 26th Annual North Carolina Workers' Compensation Educational Conference will be held October 6-8, 2021 at the Raleigh Convention Center. To protect the safety of attendees, the Conference will carefully follow all public health protocols. This year's agenda will consist of 18 topics and provide up to 12 hours of Continuing Legal Education credit.
- Effective March 1, 2021, all carriers, third-party administrators, and self-insured employers are required to provide the Commission with an email address for receipt of claim-related documents. The designated email address shall be provided to the Commission at contactinfo@ic.nc.gov. The email address provided will be used in cases where the Commission does not have an individual email address for the claims representative assigned to the claim. (See Rule 11 NCAC 23A .0109(d)). Providing an email address is mandatory and will insure timely receipt of claim-related documents.