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The 2026 Workers' Compensation Institute

TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY
APRIL 28 & 29, 2026



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TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY
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The 2026

Workers' Compensation Institute

Exceptional faculty, great session lineup,
fun setting – and practical takeaways
you can put to work immediately!

- MN Supreme Court Associate Justice
Karl Procaccini
- DLI Assistant Commissioner for Workers'
Compensation **Jessica Stimac**
- WCCA Judge **Kathryn Hipp Carlson**
- New CAH Chief Judge **Jessica Palmer-Denig**
- Orthopedic Surgeon **Chris Coetzee, MD**
- Bariatric Surgeon and Comprehensive Weight
Management Expert **Daniel Leslie, MD**
- Neurosurgeon and Brain Injury Researcher
Uzma Samadani, MD, PhD
- **Plus!** Insights from **CAH Judges Veronica
Walther, Stacy Bouman & Lisa Pearson** and
Attorneys from Both Sides of the Aisle!

CAN'T ATTEND IN PERSON?

View the online replay May 28 & 29, 2026.

VIEW INFORMATION ON
YOUR MOBILE DEVICE OR
REGISTER ONLINE



SCHEDULE

All times are CDT.

Day 1 – New Law, New Cases & Other Timely Topics

Tuesday, April 28, 2026

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.
CHECK-IN & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

9:00 – 9:05 a.m.
Welcome & Introduction
– *Joshua W. Laabs & Whitney L. Teel*
2026 Institute Co-Chairs

9:05 – 10:00 a.m.
The WCAC: Where It Came From, How It Works, and Why It Matters
The Workers' Compensation Advisory Council (WCAC) plays a key role in shaping Minnesota's workers' compensation laws. This panel discussion offers a practical look at the WCAC's formation and processes – and how its work affects day-to-day practice. When and why was it formed? What does it do? Who is included? How can one get involved? How do you identify and offer WCAC records when workers' compensation law provisions are ambiguous and legislative history is limited?
– *Jerry W. Sisk, Jessica Stimac & Katie H. Storms*
– *Hon. Karl Procaccini, moderator*

10:00 – 10:30 a.m.
Update from the New CAH Chief Judge: Court Priorities in the Near and Longer Term
The newly appointed Chief Judge of the Court of Administrative Hearings – Judge Jessica Palmer-Denig – will share her perspective on CAH's role in delivering fair, accessible, and effective adjudication in workers' comp matters and outline the priorities she'll emphasize. Learn how these priorities relate to the resolution of contested cases, the application of best practices in administrative adjudication, and the court's ongoing engagement with legal practitioners and agency partners.
– *Hon. Jessica A. Palmer-Denig*

10:30 – 10:40 a.m.
BREAK

10:40 – 11:20 a.m.
It's the End of an Era! Jeff Jacobs' Popular Annual Case Update
Jeff Jacobs returns for the final installment of his popular annual case update – highlighting key workers' compensation decisions from the past year by the Minnesota Supreme Court and the Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals.
– *Jeffrey W. Jacobs*

11:20 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.
How Minnesota's New Paid Leave Law Impacts Your Workers' Comp Cases – Offsets, Intervention, and Coordination
Minnesota's new Paid Leave law adds a major new wage benefit into the mix. A workers' compensation attorney and an employment law attorney will discuss the new law and what it means in terms of offsets, benefit coordination, and potential intervention.
– *Andrew J. Flynn & Greta Bauer Reyes*

12:20 – 1:30 p.m.
LUNCH BREAK (on attendees' own)

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. BREAKOUT SESSION A

101
A Snapshot of the New DLI PTSD Report – Practical Takeaways for Evaluating and Litigating Cases
Petitioner and defense counsel present a big picture look at MN DLI's new PTSD report. What does the report say? What do the presenters wish the report had also addressed, and why? What are the practical takeaways that might shape how we evaluate and litigate PTSD cases going forward?
– *Mary Beth Boyce & Timothy P. Jung*

102
Excess Attorneys' Fees After Jurgensen
What does it take to justify attorneys' fees beyond the statutory 20%? This session examines *Jurgensen v. Dave Perkins Contracting*, emerging judicial expectations for fee support, and practical strategies for proving, or challenging, excess fee claims in Minnesota workers' compensation cases.
– *Kelly P. Falsani, Jennifer M. Fitzgerald & Hon. Kathryn Hipp Carlson*

103
Complying with New Developments in Ethics and Professional Responsibility
1.0 ethics credit applied for
– *Aram V. Desteian & Holly N. Lechner*

2:30 – 2:45 p.m. BREAK

2:45 – 3:45 p.m. BREAKOUT SESSION B

201
Zero Allocations and MSA Strategy
Clear guidance for evaluating and documenting MSA allocation decisions – including implications for using Zero Allocations now that CMS no longer reviews them.
– *Annie M. Davidson*

202
What To Know About Workers' Compensation Claims Involving Noncitizen Workers
– *Ana Pottratz Acosta, Tracy M. Borash & Samuel A. Heacox*
– *Hon. Veronica Walther, moderator*

203
Family-Provided Nursing Services for Injured Workers: Evaluating and Litigating High-Exposure Claims
– *Benjamin J. Harper*

3:45 – 4:00 p.m. BREAK

4:00 – 5:00 p.m. PLENARY

Beyond Black Letter Law – Strategic Advocacy Around Burdens and Standards of Proof

Petitioner and defense attorneys join CAH judges to discuss strategic advocacy around burdens and standards of proof in Minnesota workers' compensation cases. The panel will examine key presumptions, effective evidence strategies, and the shift from the reasonable-grounds standard of proof at a .239 administrative conference to de novo if there's a later hearing.
– *Hon. Stacy Bouman, Norbert Cuellar, Matthew C. Kopp & Hon. Lisa B. Pearson*
– *Kelly B. Lambert, moderator*

5:00 – 6:00 p.m.
INSTITUTE RECEPTION



Day 2 – Medical Day

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.
CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

9:00 – 9:05 a.m.
WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

9:05 – 10:05 a.m.
Don't Feel Like You Have Two Left Feet When Dealing with Ankle Injuries: Inside Insights
An orthopedic ankle injury overview featuring clinical evaluations and their outcomes.
– *J. Chris Coetzee, MD*

10:05 – 10:15 a.m.
BREAK

10:15 – 11:15 a.m.
What's New in Neurotrauma: Classification of Traumatic Brain Injury and Treatment for Spinal Cord Injury
– *Uzma Samadani, MD, PhD*

11:15 – 11:25 a.m.
BREAK

11:25 a.m. – 12:25 p.m.
Pre-Surgical Weight Loss in Work Injury Cases
When injured employees must lose weight before surgery can proceed, what treatment options are physicians recommending? Dr. Daniel Leslie explains the role of medications like GLP-1 drugs, other weight-loss approaches, timelines, risks, and success rates – and what these recommendations may mean in workers' compensation cases.
– *Daniel Leslie, MD*



PLUS – 2 FREE POST-INSTITUTE WEBCASTS!

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2026 | 9:00 – 10:00 A.M. CT

Effective Communication in Difficult Situations

1.0 standard CLE credit (applied for)
– *Carolien Moors*
HardTalk Biz Coaching

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2026 | 12:00 – 1:00 P.M. CT

Perfecting Without Perfectionism: How to Strive for Excellence Without Stressing Out Over Unattainable Ideals

1.0 mental health/substance use credit (applied for)
– *Sarah M. MacGillis*
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April 28 & 29, 2026
Minnesota CLE Conference Center
600 Nicollet Mall, Suite 370
Third Floor City Center, Minneapolis

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Thursday & Friday,
May 28 & 29, 2026
View online at www.minncle.org
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