

## **Alternatives to Independent Medical Exams (IMEs)**

### **If You Can't Decide What to Do:**

- Review the file.
- Identify and get more information about unresolved issues.
- Staff the claim with a coach or more experienced claims adjudicator.

### **Attending Provider (AP)**

- Ask the AP to review the medical records. If the AP does not have a complete file, offer to send copies of the medical records in your possession.
- Give the AP a summary of the claim actions. You can ask the AP the same questions you would ask of an IME examiner. Many times the AP can help you manage the claim.
- If the AP is not qualified to answer the medical questions, ask for a referral to obtain a medical opinion from another specialty.
- When you have an IME report that is **over 6 months** old ask the AP for current medical information instead of getting a repeat IME.  
**Note:** If the worker has not been seen recently, request the AP schedule a visit with the worker to decide if the old IME report is still medically correct.
- Ask the AP to conduct an impairment rating.
  - Billing codes (1190M, 1191M, and 1192M) for AP rating are found in the Fee Schedule.
  - An AP may use Sample Report #2, Required IME Content – Rating Only located in the Appendix B of the Medical Examiner's Handbook.
  - A completed worksheet may substitute for a written report when medical documentation is current. Worksheets are found in the Medical Examiner's Handbook.

- If the AP is not willing or qualified to rate (chiropractors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners), ask them to refer the worker for a consultant rating examination. Workers are sometimes more willing to see a consultant than attend an IME.

## Consultant

- Send a letter to the consulting doctor confirming the purpose of the appointment.
  - You can ask the same questions you would ask of an IME examiner.
  - Be sure the consulting doctor has all the medical information necessary to make an informed decision.
- Billing codes (1194M, 1195M, and 1198M) for consultant ratings are in the Fee Schedule.
  - Payment is the same as an IME.
  - Consultants may use Sample Report #2, Required IME Content – Rating Only, located in Appendix B of the Medical Examiner’s Handbook.
  - A completed worksheet may accompany the written report. Worksheets are found in the Medical Examiner’s Handbook.

## Rating Only Examinations

- If you must request an IME to obtain the rating, then request an IME rating only exam. Approved IME examiners may use the rating only example form in the Appendix of the Medical Examiner’s Handbook.
- Remember approved pain programs may rate when asked by the claim manager and bill using 1122M. They will include the rating in the final report.

## Links to:

- Medical Examiner’s Handbook:  
<http://lni.wa.gov/FormPub/Detail.asp?DocID=1668>
- Fee Schedule:  
<http://lni.wa.gov/ClaimsIns/Providers/Billing/FeeSched/2010/default.asp>