

Workers' Comp/Pharmaceutical Reform Bill Becomes Law

10/27/2014

HARRISBURG - Unanimously passing the state House last week and the Senate the week before, an unprecedented Workers' Compensation reform bill was signed into law today by the governor, announced Rep. Mike Turzai (R-Allegheny).

House Bill 1846, now Act 184, authored by Rep. Marguerite Quinn (R-Bucks), removes a costly price-adjustment loophole that allowed repackaged prescription drugs to be dispensed directly by doctors to injured workers. The law puts limits on physician dispensing in workers' compensation to ensure injured workers get the access they need to prescription drugs at an affordable price.

"This new law helps ease increasing costs while maintaining the availability and quality health care Pennsylvania workers expect," Turzai said. "After months of collaboration with national policy experts and Pennsylvania's job creators, health care, and insurance industries, this commonsense reform prevents abuse of potent and addictive painkillers while still providing patients with the convenience and immediate relief they need."

The new law imposes a general 30-day limit on physician-dispensed drugs, starting with the injured worker's initial treatment with a health care provider. It imposes a seven-day limit on dispensing Schedule II and III drugs (opioids) with a conditional 15-day extension if the patient requires surgery. It totally bans physician dispensing of over-the-counter drugs and places a cap on cost of drugs.

Previously, the loophole created a myriad of undesirable effects including inflated workers' compensation premiums for employers, proven cost increases, and narcotics abuse and addiction.

Estimates from the state Department of Labor and Industry and the Insurance Federation of Pennsylvania project Act 184 will reduce prescription costs for injured workers as much as 15 percent and save employers \$33 million annually.

Turzai noted House Bill 1846 would not have become law without the bipartisan work between Quinn and the chairmen of the House Labor and Industry Committee, Rep. Mario Scavello (R-Monroe) and Rep. Bill Keller (D-Philadelphia).

Under Turzai's leadership, House Republicans have focused on improving the state's jobs climate and reducing the overall cost of doing business in Pennsylvania, and the numbers are telling. Thanks in part to their legislative efforts, the state's unemployment rate dropped to 5.7 percent from 8.2 percent in January 2011.

The House Republican agenda items included timely and responsible

budgeting, tax cuts, lawsuit abuse reform, and unemployment compensation reform for the first time ever, as well as fostering the use of private sector dollars and public funds to put in new or modernize our existing infrastructure, sensibly dealing with drilling impacts, and passing regulatory reforms.

Representative Mike Turzai
Majority Leader
28th District
Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Media Contact: Stephen Miskin
717.772.9943 (office), 717.756.3936 (cell)
smiskin@pahousegop.com
RepTurzai.com / facebook.com/RepTurzai