

May 14,2024

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a Psychologist who has worked at Behavioral Medicine Associates for almost 4 years. I have heard some heart wrenching stories of the plight of injured workers that I see in my profession.

The majority of my patients have expressed that it has been a nightmare dealing with Workers Comp (WC). They have expressed intense suffering mentally, emotionally and physically. The majority either suffer from depression, anxiety, PTSD or adjustment disorders that are causally or consequentially related to their injuries. They feel victimized by the WC system that have failed them miserably with frequent denial or delays in treatment which has lead to detrimental consequences to their recovery. Furthermore, their injuries have totally disrupted their lives and not being able to work has negatively impacted them socially and financially. There are several who forced to live in poverty off welfare, and on the verge of losing their homes because they cannot pay their mortgage or other bills. While there are others on the verge of a divorce due to interpersonal difficulties with their spouses and not being able to provide for their family.

Here are some quotes below from some of my patients:

1. "I finally got injection treatment after 18 months of denials. Can you believe that. They keep denying the basic treatment I deserve, my pain medications. Prisoners and immigrants get better healthcare than I do. When you read the side effects of one of my medication, it says you should not stop cold turkey because suicidal ideation is a side effect and do you think they care. I am going through withdrawals symptoms now because two of the tree medications I need were not filled. Every month there is a problem with them renewing my medication even though it was already approved. I am angry and no one wants to be around me. I don't even want to wake up in the mornings because of all this suffering. This is no way to live. They took everything from me, my life, my career, my family, my identity, everything."
2. "No one is listening to me, I feel so lost. It is a shame the way they treat injured workers. I am miserable and suffering in pain all the time without relief. How long can I live like this."
3. It is so frustrating. I got the authorization for treatment but the adjuster did not put it in. Does that make sense/ what is wrong with these people. Do they realize we are human beings with emotions and feelings and physical ailments that will deteriorate without treatment."
4. "They don't realize the way they treat us is dehumanizing and adds to our trauma and depression. It's like adding injury to injury. It's like I'm being blamed for my injuries. It is not my fault. I did not cause this to happen to me. You think I want to stay home. I want to work. I am making half of my salary. You think I would willingly choose to do this."
5. "They treat me like a criminal who committed a crime or fraud. Who is making these decisions to deny my treatment? These cannot be medical professionals. How can they go against my doctors' opinion. They even go against the IME decision at times. That makes no sense."
6. "They pressure me to job search even though my doctors say I can't work. I have cognitive impairments since my head injury, memory issues and I can't even focus or concentrate. Who would even hire me?"
7. "This IME doctor does not see that I am a sick woman. He wrote that I can go back to work without any restrictions when I fall two to three times a week. I have to use a walker or wheelchair to get around. I went to his office in a wheel chair, yet he lied in the report and said I don't use any assisted devices. I think he needs to be evaluated and get psychotherapy."
8. "It has been stressful dealing with WC. I don't know why they make this so difficult for us to get the treatment we deserve."

This is only a small synopsis of the suffering my patients have endured and to be honest, I sometimes feel helpless as I attempt to assist them to work through the emotional toll of their injuries and the injustices they encounter as they navigate this broken WC system that has failed them miserably. I provide emotional support and help them to develop adaptive coping strategies with the use of cognitive behavioral therapy and other mood management tools. However, I must admit that sometimes, I feel defeated in my efforts because the system is working against them. I have encouraged several of them to share their stories and I trust you will be able to hear the plight of these incredible injured workers who are suffering. I also trust this is a step in the right direction towards proactive and not reactive change for injured workers who deserve to be heard and treated with dignity and respect.

Sincerely,
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