

WCB Can't Revoke Injured Worker's Authorization to Use Opioids



At first, workers' comp approved opioid medications for the physical and psychological pain of a worker as a result of a work-related lower back injury. But when a stint in a pain clinic failed to taper his use, the case manager refused to authorize the drugs. Under Alberta WCB Policy 04-06, the WCB may suspend or take back a previous authorization in the event of dosage increases or indications of medical damage, abuse or interference with the worker's rehab and return. The Appeals Commission ruled that the WCB didn't produce enough evidence to show that any of these criteria were met, particularly in light of the medical records indicating that the worker still needed the drugs and was at risk of overdose if he didn't get them [*Decision No.: 2019-0219, 2019 CanLII 33372 (AB WCAC)*, April 17, 2019].