

Submission
No 281

INQUIRY INTO NSW WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

Name: Name suppressed
Date received: 17/05/2012

Partially Confidential

To: workers compensation parliamentary inquiry

My wife suffered an extremely rare injury whilst driving to work in 2006 (stretching of the Sacro-Iliac Joint ligaments, resulting in significant pelvic instability). She is partially back at work now, but that is more about our financial circumstances than what is best for her. She is still in significant pain. To provide you with an indication (which you can easily check with a medical practitioner), she is on a minimum of 300mg/day of Tramadol Hydrochloride. She is on other medications as well, but this information should be enough to indicate that she is in significant and severe pain.

Due to mis-diagnosis and incorrect remedial treatment (some of which is workcover and some not) she suffered consequential injuries and has had to have operations to areas not related to the original injury.

Specific points in relation to the operation of the current workcover scheme that I would like to raise with you are:

1. There are no specialists nominated by workcover that are experienced in the specific injury my wife has. As a result we have no choice but to accept rulings from workcover approved specialists, even if they contradict multiple relevant specialist opinions, and even if they are not experienced with this specific form of injury. My wife's injury is usually misdiagnosed by orthopaedic surgeons yet these are the specialists appointed to assess her.
2. There is little focus on fixing the injury by workcover staff. They are just applying rules and do not take a holistic approach or interest in the treatment required, let alone peripheral issues like what it does to other family members. Home assistance is only provided for an initial three months and then not provided until the injury has reached maximum medical improvement. We still haven't reached this point after five years, and yet my wife is not supposed to use a vacuum cleaner etc.

3. My wife's claim was originally accepted, then later rejected, in the face of substantial evidence to the contrary. This decision was eventually overturned, but we had to go to tribunal level to achieve this.

I have only had two days notice to put this submission together so I apologise for that. We can give you any more detail which you might require.

Thank you