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To: Texas Workers' Compensation System Participants

From: Graves Owen, M.D., Medical Advisor

Date: April 23, 2026

Subject: DWC Finalizes the 2026 Annual Audit Plan

On December 17, 2025, the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) pursued and received constructive input from workers' compensation system participants on the proposed Medical Quality Review Calendar Year 2026 Annual Audit Plan (Audit Plan). In its Audit Plan, DWC proposed to select one audit focused either on the medical necessity and appropriateness of prescribing topical analgesics or on evaluating utilization review agent peer review reports for compliance with the Official Disability Guidelines, accepted standards of care, and appropriate reviewer selection.

We selected the topic of *Topical Analgesics Plan-Based Audit* based on stakeholder feedback. The medical advisor may recommend revisions to the Audit Plan, subject to commissioner approval. If time and resources permit, the subsequent audit will also be conducted.

The Audit Plan sets the priorities for the medical quality review audits during the upcoming year. Information about the [Medical Quality Review Process](#) and the proposed Annual Plan is on the [Office of the Medical Advisor](#) webpage.

The medical advisor is responsible for developing the Audit Plan, which is adopted by the commissioner of workers' compensation. To conduct the audit, the medical advisor evaluates plan categories using the criteria listed in the Process. Medical quality reviews help DWC monitor compliance with the Texas Labor Code and DWC rules.

If you have any questions, contact Jennifer Self at 512-804-4852 or [Jennifer.Self@tdi.texas.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Self@tdi.texas.gov).