

WORKERS' COMPENSATION
MANAGEMENT-LABOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Full Committee Meeting

Jan. 22, 2026

10:00am

Virtual meeting

Committee members (present via zoom):

MLAC members and the organization they represent:

Co-Chair Scott Strickland, SMART, Local 16

Sara Duckwall, Duckwall Fruit

Ryan Hearn, Anduril Industries

Margaret Weddell, Labor Representative

Stacy Lewallen, Fortis Construction

Emily Cronan, Oregon Nurses Association

Sean O'Day, Director DCBS

Committee members absent:

Co-Chair Patrick Priest, CIS Trust

Sarah Merrick, City of Salem Fire Department

Kim Schlessinger, Samaritan Health Services

Staff:

Teri Watson, MLAC Committee Administrator

Baaba Ampah, MLAC Assistant

Agenda Item	Discussion
Opening (00:00:06)	Affirmation and Roll Call Co-Chair Strickland called the meeting to order and shared an affirmation. Teri Watson called the roll of members. A quorum was present.
(00:02:31)	Public Comment – LC 241 - Dan Beeson, DC Dr. Beeson, a physician of 52 years of practice, testified in opposition to LC 241, section 49, which would grant physician assistants (PAs) and nurse practitioners (NPs) attending physician status. He stated that PAs and NPs do not receive physician-level training or clinical skills and cited his experience working with nurse practitioners in an integrated clinic, noting they required additional training in neuromusculoskeletal diagnosis and treatment. Dr. Beeson noted that while he appreciates their skills, he opposes granting them full physician status.
(00:04:15)	John Helton, DC Dr. Helton testified in opposition to granting NPs and PAs attending physician status, citing his 45 years of clinical experience and educational background. He

emphasized that the primary goal of the workers' compensation system should be to return injured workers to work quickly and affordably with good future outcomes. Dr. Helton expressed concern that the current system is failing to meet this goal and suggested that traditional medical referral practices contribute to the problem. His testimony ended with an invitation to provide additional comments in writing or at a future meeting.

Todd Turnbull, DC

(00:08:02) Dr. Todd Turnbull urged the committee to focus on serving Oregon residents, arguing that injured workers need physical medicine, which most NPs and PAs do not provide. He expressed that granting them attending physician status would not add value to the system. Dr. Turnbull encouraged restoring attending status to other licensed and certified healthcare providers.

Review minutes from Jan. 8, 2026.

(00:10:29) Sara Duckwall moved to approve the minutes. Stacy Lewallen seconded the motion. The motion passed with no abstention or opposition.

(00:11:24) Director O'Day was noted as present.

2026 LC Presentations:

LC 26 – Josh Nasbe, Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI)

(00:11:36) Josh Nasbe showed his appreciation to the committee and noted that the amendment language is not yet available. He explained that LC 26 will be introduced as Senate Bill (SB) 1506 by Sen. Kathleen Taylor, to address BOLI's funding challenges. He referenced SB 901, which was tabled during the last session, and the temporary funding of \$15 million from the Worker Benefit Fund (WBF) to support BOLI through the 2027-2029 biennium. Josh described a proposed assessment-based funding approach which will use existing WBF collection infrastructure to assess two-tenths of one cent, equally divided between labor and industry, to support approximately \$19 million in BOLI's staffing through an estimated 2033 timeframe. Funds would be placed in a separate account and would not impact the WBF, its programs, or oversights, and any revenue loss would be absorbed by BOLI. The goal of SB 1506 is not to impact the funds in the WBF in any way, but instead utilize the existing infrastructure to collect an equally divided assessment from both labor and industry to better fund BOLI. No vote was expected, and the committee expects the item to be at future meetings, potentially with amendment language available.

(00:16:15) Sara Duckwall asked about the \$19 million figure, as it is anticipated to increase over time, and what the parameters are. Josh Nasbe explained it is made up of two parts: continuation of the temporary positions funded through the WBF last session for four-year period, and additional staffing identified by the work group as necessary to meet BOLI's workload.

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- (00:17:49) Stacy Lewallen asked why the WBF was chosen, as opposed to creating a separate program. Josh Nasbe explained that the work group was interested in efficiency by using an existing, cost-effective collection and distribution mechanism, noting that the assessment is equally funded by labor and industry.
- (00:18:55) Sara Duckwall asked how the proposal is aligned with the Governor's prosperity roadmap. Josh Nasbe explained that he can only speak on how the proposal would fund the Bureau of Labor and Industries' operations and does not have a position on the governor's work group. When asked whether the proposal increases taxes, he clarifies that the DCBS' calculations show it would add an additional one-tenth of a penny assessment on both labor and industry.
- (00:19:48) It was noted to reach out to Josh Nasbe for any additional questions. Co-Chair Strickland thanked Josh Nasbe for his presentation.
- LC 178 – Odalis Aguilar-Aguilar, AFSCME**
- (00:21:15) Odalis Aguilar-Aguilar provided a brief update on LC 178 and noted that stakeholders have been working with staff to address questions. A [redlined version for LC178](#) was posted and SAIF was invited to provide an overview of proposed changes.
- (00:22:05) Ivo Trummer, SAIF, stated that SAIF reviewed concerns raised in the WCD [Bill Analysis](#) on the initial draft and proposed solutions. He noted that SAIF remains neutral on the bill, even if the suggested changes are adopted. Their primary focus is ensuring that, as the insurer, they can successfully implement any adjustments, particularly changes involving the average weekly wage or total disability calculations.
- (00:22:53) Elaine Schooler, SAIF, explained SAIF's revision of LC 178:
- The time-loss rate should be calculated using the worker's wage on the date of injury and remain static, rather than being recalculated annually when the state average weekly wage changes.
 - o Workers would still receive annual cost-of-living adjustments, consistent with the current system.
 - These changes are intended to apply to claims with a date of injury on or after January 1, 2027. For occupational disease claims, the date of injury is interpreted as the first date of treatment or disability.
 - These changes are not retroactive and will not change benefits for workers currently receiving time-loss.
 - Updates to the permanent total disability calculation to align with the temporary total disability method, while preserving the existing statutory minimum benefit.
- (00:27:40) Kirsten Adam, AGC, showed her appreciation to SAIF for the thorough explanation of the revisions to LC 178.
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(00:27:49)	It was clarified that SAIF is neutral on the bill and shared its red-line draft with stakeholders (AGC, OBI, and AFSCME). SAIF is not asking for an amendment to the draft; stakeholders must decide how to proceed. Odalis Aguilar-Aguilar stated that AFSCME has reviewed SAIF's red-line and accepts the proposed changes, and this is their final amendment request to the drafter. Kirsten Adams approves of SAIF's red-line draft.
(00:30:01)	Jovanna Patrick, OTLA, expressed her appreciation for the collaborative process, noting that OTLA was involved and is satisfied with the current bill.
(00:30:28)	Alex Blosser, Chief of Staff for Sen. Kathleen Taylor, clarified that the "relating to" clause in the bill has already been updated. He noted the updates align with changes suggested in SAIF's red line edits. Ivo Trummer reported SAIF's actuarial team re-ran impact numbers incorporating all proposed changes and estimated that the impact remains at 2.9% with some caveats.
(00:31:58)	Sara Duckwall asked if WCD has reviewed SAIF's language and if it has addressed their concerns. Matt West, WCD Administrator, answered that once the final language has been received, they would then complete another bill analysis.
(00:32:50)	It was clarified that all stakeholders approve of the draft language, with SAIF remaining neutral in keeping with the subcommittee's intent.
(00:31:54)	Ivo Trummer asked for clarification that the language will come in an amendment and not a redrafted bill. Alex Blosser agreed the only change is the relating clause and it would be a full amendment. He explained that the final language will not be received until the Feb. 5 MLAC meeting.
(00:34:41)	Odalis Aguilar-Aguilar showed her appreciation to Sen. Kathleen Taylor and Alex Blosser for their time and commitment. Co-Chair Strickland also thanked stakeholders for their engagement.
(00:35:54)	<p data-bbox="396 1402 1341 1470">LC 241 – Taylor Sarman, Oregon Society of Physician Associates and Racheal Young, PA</p> <p data-bbox="396 1478 1433 1831">Taylor Sarman explained that LC 241 will become House Bill (HB) 4040. The concept is to remove arbitrary barriers for PAs and NPs to see and treat Oregon workers. Right now, PAs can serve as the primary treating provider for up to 180 days, provide compensable medical services during that period, and authorize temporary disability payments and release workers back to work. HB 4040 would remove the 180-day limit, allowing PAs and NPs to continue treating a worker for the full duration of the claim when qualified to do so. It will also establish impairment findings and provide compensable medical services for aggravation claims. This would increase access to care in rural and underserved communities.</p>

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- (00:38:46) Rachel Young, PA, explained her background as a PA with 33 years of medical experience. She described that the limited authority of PAs in the workers' compensation system causes long delays, increases system costs, disrupts continuity of care, and pushes more injured workers into emergency rooms. Rachel emphasized that PAs are highly trained, and collaborative medical professionals with broad clinical authority. She concluded that approving this bill increases patient access and improves continuity of care, decreases costs and time loss, and gets the patient back to work in a timely fashion while continuing to provide the highest level of evidence-based care.
- (00:42:33) It was stated that there will be minor and technical amendments related to feedback received from DCBS staff.
- (00:43:08) Sara Duckwall commented that after the final language of HB 4040, MLAC might be able to address open ended time loss in the future.
- (00:43:57) Emily Cronan expressed her concerns on previous comments that NPs and PAs are being characterized as limited medication-only providers, arguing that this framing misrepresents their education that's grounded in advanced assessment, differential diagnosis, evidence-based practice, and patient advocacy. With nearly 4,000 NPs and PAs practicing across Oregon, often as the only available providers in rural or community-based settings, expanding Type A eligibility is essential for timely, and accessible care. She concluded by questioning whether the opposition is truly centered on injured workers' needs given the state's significant provider shortages.
- (00:46:09) Taylor Sarman is available for any future questions.
- (00:47:44) Margaret Weddell noted that chiropractic physicians have provided a lot of information asking for longer attending-provider authority, but management, labor, and industry stakeholders have not clearly stated their positions on the issue. She hoped that MLAC would encourage a response; members will discuss during caucus.
- (00:49:14) WCD noted that once the final bill (HB 4040) is received, members will receive a bill analysis. A brief caucus was taken shortly after.
- (00:49:44) Co-Chair Strickland after additional discussion noted that MLAC is looking for additional information and more stakeholder engagement. Teri Watson noted that the bill analysis will be provided when the bill language is available.
- (00:50:58) **Upcoming meetings – Feb. 5, March 5, and April 2, all virtual.**
Upcoming legislative meetings - Jan. 29, Feb. 12, Feb. 19, and Feb. 26, all virtual.
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(00:51:10) Co-Chair Strickland adjourned the meeting at 11:04 a.m.

*These minutes include time stamps from the meeting video found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akRghHWSzYk&feature=youtu.be>

**Referenced documents can be found on the MLAC Meeting Information page here:

<https://www.oregon.gov/dcbs/mlac/Pages/2026-meetings.aspx>