



July 15, 2020

Management-Labor Advisory Committee (MLAC)
Department of Consumer and Business Services
State of Oregon
350 Winter Street NE
P.O. Box 14480
Salem, OR 97309-0405

RE: COVID-19 and Workers' Compensation

Dear Labor Co-Chair Winther and Management Co-Chair Wood,

The Portland Business Alliance (the Alliance) is greater Portland's Chamber of Commerce and represents the largest, most diverse network of employers in the region. The Alliance advocates for the employer community at all levels of government to create opportunity and advance well-being for all who live and work in our region and to support a healthy and resilient business ecosystem. We represent nearly 1,900 members, from 27 counties, 13 states and virtually every industry sector. More than 80% of our members are small businesses.

First, thank you for your service volunteering to serve Oregonians on this vital committee and for your leadership on this important issue on which Governor Brown has requested input.

The employer community faces unprecedented challenges to provide workplaces safe from the spread of COVID-19. Among those challenges are the rapidly changing recommendations from a multitude of state agencies, each with a role to play in containing the coronavirus.

MLAC's recent study of this issue shows the workers compensation system is working as intended. Claims are being filed, investigated, and are issued either an acceptance (in the vast majority of claims) or denial. A worker who receives a denial of their COVID-19 claim has the same right to appeal as with any other denied claim.

Workers exposed to the virus at work are protected. The presumption that working Oregonians who have COVID-19 could only have been exposed at work, risks the stability and balance of the workers compensation system. And it would unfairly burden the system.

Part of the success of MLAC has been making decisions based on evidence. The data we have heard supports that the system is working as intended. A presumption of compensability for COVID-19 is not needed.

Thank you for time and attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Andrew Hoan
President and CEO