

In her September 19, 2017 response to the Board's Recommendation #7, Ms. Hearthway offered to provide additional information on the approaches the current EEOIPCA program organizational structure takes to ensure quality, consistency, and objectivity, presumably in the form of OWCP internal peer review. However, no additional information has yet been provided. The Board's concern centers around the professional isolation a solo physician experiences in any practice setting and the need for internal collegial case discussion and review. For example, in the Department of Labor's OSHA Office of Occupational Medicine and Nursing, regular case conferences are held to discuss fitness for duty questions, consultation issues from the field are discussed weekly, trainees develop and offer presentations about questions that arise during their rotations, staff physicians regularly present information at national medical meetings, conduct monthly update telephone meetings with scientists at NIOSH, and undergo the rigors of peer-review to publish findings. These activities require a critical mass of physicians and healthcare scientists to accomplish.

We await further information from the program.