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WC Division Process Improvements Save Costs, Strengthen Customer Service

MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Caleb Frostman announced today that the Division of Worker's Compensation (WC) has successfully rolled out a new electronic warrant filing system that streamlines the process to file WC warrants and will save tens of thousands of dollars annually.

The new electronic warrant (e-warrant) filing system, developed with the cooperation of the Wisconsin Court System, allows WC staff to seamlessly file warrants with Wisconsin circuit courts when WC looks to recover benefits costs paid out of the state's Uninsured Employers Fund (UEF). The UEF pays benefits on claims filed by employees who are injured while working for illegally uninsured employers.

"Warrant filing is a powerful administrative tool to hold employers accountable when they fail to carry worker's compensation insurance as required by law and to ensure solvency of the Uninsured Employers Fund to pay benefits to injured workers," Secretary Frostman said. "This electronic enhancement brings greater precision and speed to our WC system as we work to ensure a level playing field for Wisconsin employers and to advance worker protections."

The WC e-warrant filing project streamlines the warranting process for more than 4,000 transactions annually. Examples of process improvements include:

- Eliminating daily printing, transporting, and mailing of paper warrants.
- Improving overall accuracy through automated data transfers.
- Allowing for one-day processing of warrant, satisfaction and withdrawal transactions.

Estimated savings through these process enhancements surpass \$55,000 per year for the WC system, which is funded through an annual administrative assessment on insurance carriers and self-insured employers. Earlier in July, the Wisconsin Commissioner of Insurance approved an overall 8.84 percent rate decrease for WC premiums for businesses, marking the fourth consecutive year of decline.

"Wisconsin's worker's compensation system is truly a bargain for Wisconsin employers and workers alike, and our work to curtail its operational costs and strengthen service quality will only further strengthen our nationally recognized system," Secretary Frostman said. "I'd like to recognize WC staff for their commitment to innovation and excellent public service, and I thank the Wisconsin Court System, including county circuit courts, for their cooperation on this project as well."

Work on the project began in September 2018 and was completed in June 2019.

The WC Division has rolled out other technology-supported enhancements within the past two years. Examples include:

- A new online portal for attorney firms to upload litigated documents and forms for WC cases via a secure login website instead of by fax or post. WC began piloting the resource last year and rolled out the portal statewide in mid-July. The portal saves time and eliminates paper processing by WC staff, allows for the eventual elimination of hard copy files and provides cost savings to attorney firms that no longer have to send litigated documents via US mail or through a fax utility

that often incurs monthly charges.

- The December 2017 replacement of the UEF collection system from a 1990s-era patchwork mainframe to a 21st century interface. The system tracks accounts through the entire collection cycle, eliminates dead ends, standardizes submission for state debt collection, allows for the eventual elimination of hard copy files, creates enhanced electronic reporting and enhances data integrity.

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