



Illinois
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From the Illinois State Medical Society

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 28, 2018

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GOVERNOR RAUNER VETOES IMPORTANT HEALTH CARE PROTECTIONS

Statement of Illinois State Medical Society President-Elect Paul E. Pedersen, MD

Illinois physicians are *deeply* disappointed by Governor Rauner's amendatory veto of Senate Bill 904, which included important bipartisan protections within the workers' compensation system. The Governor's action gives workers' comp insurance companies continuing latitude to skirt current law on payment of workers' compensation claims. Quality medical care is key to reducing workplace injuries and getting injured workers back to work. This is an important benefit to both the injured worker and the employer.

We consider Governor Rauner's amendatory veto of SB 904 a huge setback for the medical community, employers and injured workers. The important care provided by doctors, hospitals, and other providers is threatened because of a loophole being exploited by workers' compensation insurance companies that allows them to authorize treatment and then not pay a medical provider, which can stretch as long as three years.

This loophole is so egregious that even the Illinois Appellate Court sent a notice to the Illinois Department of Insurance about the questionable practices of Illinois workers compensation insurance companies.

Right now, doctors in Illinois are owed millions of dollars for approved workers' compensation medical care. We know of one medical practice that is currently owed \$24 million in pre-authorized claims. Senate Bill 904 would avoid the bureaucracy of the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission and allow for a right of action in Circuit Court to collect those amounts receivable with an interest penalty, a right that was written into the law in 2005 and agreed to by the business community.

By rejecting SB 904, Governor Rauner also allows insurers to continue ignoring mandatory electronic billing requirements enacted in 2011. These insurers are clinging to an all-paper based billing system that delays care and payments.

ISMS thanks the members of the General Assembly for passing SB 904 by an overwhelming margin. On behalf of Illinois physicians and the injured workers we serve, ISMS will seek an override of this amendatory veto.

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*Founded in 1840, ISMS is a professional membership association representing Illinois physicians in all medical specialties, and their patients, statewide.
Dr. Pedersen practices internal medicine in Bloomington.*