

## CHAPTER 326

[Substitute Senate Bill No. 3542]

## SELF-INSURERS' CLOSURE OF MEDICAL TREATMENT CLAIMS

AN ACT Relating to self-insurers' closure of claims involving medical treatment; and amending section 46, chapter 289, Laws of 1971 ex. sess. as amended by section 43, chapter 350, Laws of 1977 ex. sess. and RCW 51.32.055.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

Section 1. Section 46, chapter 289, Laws of 1971 ex. sess. as amended by section 43, chapter 350, Laws of 1977 ex. sess. and RCW 51.32.055 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) One purpose of this title is to restore the injured worker as near as possible to the condition of self-support as an able-bodied worker. Benefits for permanent disability shall be determined under the director's supervision only after the injured worker's condition becomes fixed.

(2) All determinations of permanent disabilities shall be made by the department. Either the worker, employer, or self-insurer may make a request or such inquiry may be initiated by the director on his or her own motion. Such determinations shall be required in every instance where permanent disability is likely to be present. All medical reports and other pertinent information in the possession of or under the control of the employer or self-insurer shall be forwarded to the director with such requests.

(3) A request for determination of permanent disability shall be examined by the department and an order shall issue in accordance with RCW 51.52.050.

(4) The department may require that the worker present himself or herself for a special medical examination by a physician, or physicians, selected by the department, and the department may require that the worker present himself or herself for a personal interview. In such event the costs of such examination or interview, including payment of any reasonable travel expenses, shall be paid by the department or self-insurer as the case may be.

(5) The director may establish a medical bureau within the department to perform medical examinations under this section. Physicians hired or retained for this purpose shall be grounded in industrial medicine and in the assessment of industrial physical impairment. Self-insurers shall bear a proportionate share of the cost of such medical bureau in a manner to be determined by the department.

(6) Where dispute arises from the handling of any claims prior to the condition of the injured worker becoming fixed, the worker, employer, or

self-insurer may request the department to resolve the dispute or the director may initiate an inquiry on his or her own motion. In such cases the department shall proceed as provided in this section and an order shall issue in accordance with RCW 51.52.050.

(7) In the case of claims accepted by self-insurers which involve only medical treatment and which do not involve payment of temporary disability compensation under RCW 51.32.090 and which at the time medical treatment is concluded do not involve permanent disability, such claims may be closed by the self-insurers subject to reporting of claims to the department in a manner prescribed by department rules promulgated pursuant to chapter 34.04 RCW. Upon such closure the self-insurers shall enter a written order, communicated to the worker, which contains the following statement clearly set forth in bold-face type: "This order constitutes notification that your claim is being closed with medical benefits only, as provided. If for any reason you disagree with this closure, you may protest in writing to the Department of Labor and Industries, Olympia, within 60 days of the date you received this order. The department will then review your claim and enter a further determinative order." In the event the department receives such a protest it shall review the claim and enter a further determinative order as provided for in RCW 51.52.050.

Passed the Senate March 31, 1981.

Passed the House April 21, 1981.

Approved by the Governor May 19, 1981.

Filed in Office of Secretary of State May 19, 1981.

## CHAPTER 327

[Engrossed Senate Bill No. 3871]

### NORTH RICHLAND TOLL BRIDGE—APPROPRIATION

AN ACT Relating to a toll bridge at north Richland; amending section 1, chapter 212, Laws of 1979 ex. sess. and RCW 47.56.740; amending section 3, chapter 212, Laws of 1979 ex. sess. and RCW 47.56.742; amending section 6, chapter 212, Laws of 1979 ex. sess. and RCW 47.56.745; amending section 9, chapter 212, Laws of 1979 ex. sess. and RCW 47.56.748; and making an appropriation.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Washington:

Section 1. Section 1, chapter 212, Laws of 1979 ex. sess. and RCW 47.56.740 are each amended to read as follows:

Subject to the provisions of RCW 47.56.741, 47.56.742, and 47.56.743, the department of transportation is hereby authorized and directed to make all necessary surveys and to design and construct a toll bridge across the Columbia river. The approaches to the toll bridge shall (1) extend from the bridge to ~~((George Washington Way on the west and from the bridge easterly to state route number 395 and southerly and easterly to state route~~