

The advocate link—personally serving the severely injured worker

A catastrophic nurse advocate (CNA) has specialized experience and training in the rehabilitation of severely injured workers. The CNA acts as the injured workers' advocate, ensuring they receive quality customer service.

The CNA is the liaison between the managed care organization (MCO) and the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation's (BWC's) customer service team managing a catastrophically injured worker's claim. The CNA is the link that connects everyone involved — the injured worker's physician, family, employer, attorney, and hospital or medical providers.

Defining a catastrophic injury

Catastrophic injuries severely limit physical or cognitive functions that affect one's ability to perform activities of daily living care, such as eating, dressing, walking, personal hygiene, and controlling bodily functions.

Catastrophic injuries include:

- Multiple fractures or crush injuries;
- Spinal cord injuries, such as paraplegia, quadriplegia, hemiplegia or diplegia;
- Multiple major extremity amputations or fractures (excludes the loss of fingers);
- Major organ transplants;
- Moderate to severe brain or brain stem injuries;
- Second- or third-degree burns on more than 25 percent of the body;
- Total industrial blindness;
- Total hearing loss;
- Severe occupational diseases and bloodborne pathogens;
- Any injury with statutory permanent total disability award;
- Any other medical diagnoses identified by the MCO and the CNA.

Other injured workers may benefit from CNA intervention. This includes medical complications in a claim that severely impair an injured worker's functioning after the date of injury.

How the CNA serves the injured worker

On-site visits — Hospital and home visits allow the injured worker to place a face with a name. This personal service approach allows CNAs to act as the eyes for the MCO so they can accurately report the injured worker's progress and gather information for the plan of care.

Prompt claim allowances — CNAs assist in initial and proactive claim allowances. The goal is for BWC to allow the claim within 48 hours so the injured worker's family is not burdened with financial or treatment issues. The result is prompt payment of compensation benefits. CNAs also will assist in completing BWC forms.

MCO partnerships — CNAs communicate with BWC and the MCO regarding the status of the case. Together, they discuss the progress and effectiveness of the injured worker's plan of care, as well as identify future needs.

Home and vehicle modifications — CNAs provide information and authorize appropriate requests for home and vehicle modifications.

Community support resource — CNAs can make the injured worker aware of community support groups and other services in the area.

Vocational rehabilitation services — CNAs may identify the best time for referral to a vocational rehabilitation professional with the goal of returning the injured worker to work.

Catastrophic case management plan —

Together with the MCO, CNAs assess long-term needs of severely disabled injured workers and their families to ensure the injured workers return to the optimal level of functioning. CNAs authorize the plan and BWC reimburses for allowable services.

Catastrophic nurse advocates (CNAs)

If you know someone with a catastrophic work injury, please contact one of these CNAs.

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*Denotes the CNA's main location

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Bureau of Workers'
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Catastrophic nurse advocates

Linking the managed care
organization and BWC to personally
serve the catastrophically
injured worker



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Compensation