

PUZZLE SOLUTION – August 2010 *DHRS-I Insider*

Scenario: You are a supervisor with an employee who has filed a form CA-1, *Notice of Traumatic Injury*, due to a recent work-related injury. The employee has provided you with medical documentation supporting a brief period of temporary total disability for work due to the injury. The medical documentation confirms the work events leading up to the injury, and it provides a firm diagnosis, the anticipated treatment plan, and a medical opinion relating the claimed work factors to the employee's medical condition. Upon closer inspection, you note that the medical documentation is signed by a Nurse Practitioner (NP). When you ask the employee about this, he explains that when he contacted his doctor's office and requested to be seen immediately, the NP was the only one who could see him. He relates that he's seen this same NP before due to non-industrial illness and his insurance plan has paid benefits without incident. The employee has elected Continuation of Pay (COP) for his work-related period of disability. What do you do?

The best answer is:

B. You advise the employee that you must have medical documentation that is countersigned by an actual medical doctor in order to support the COP request. You grant the COP provisionally.

Injured employees are entitled under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA), to select the physician who is to provide treatment. The provider must meet the definition of "physician" under the FECA program and must not have been excluded from payment under the program. Under FECA, the term "physician" includes surgeons, osteopathic practitioners, podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, optometrists, and chiropractors within the scope of their practice as defined by State law. Naturopaths, faith healers, and other practitioners of the healing arts not recognized as physicians within the meaning of the law.