WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §23-1-13

§23-1-13. Rules of procedure and evidence; persons authorized to appear in proceedings; withholding of psychiatric and psychological reports and providing summaries thereof.

(a) The Insurance Commissioner shall adopt reasonable and proper rules of procedure, regulate and provide for the kind and character of notices, and the service of the notices, in cases of accident and injury to employees, the nature and extent of the proofs and evidence, the method of taking and furnishing of evidence to establish the rights to benefits or compensation from the fund hereinafter provided for, or directly from employers as hereinafter provided, as the case may require, and the method of making investigations, physical examinations and inspections and prescribe the time within which adjudications and awards shall be made.

(b) At hearings and other proceedings before the Insurance Commissioner or before the duly authorized representative of the Insurance Commissioner, an employer who is a natural person may appear, and a claimant may appear, only as follows:

(1) By an attorney duly licensed and admitted to the practice of law in this state;

(2) By a nonresident attorney duly licensed and admitted to practice before a court of record of general jurisdiction in another state or country or in the District of Columbia who has complied with the provisions of rule 8.0 - admission pro hac vice, West Virginia Supreme Court Rules for admission to the practice of law, as amended;

(3) By a representative from a labor organization who has been recognized by the Insurance Commissioner as being qualified to represent a claimant or who is an individual otherwise found to be qualified by the Insurance Commissioner to act as a representative. The representative shall participate in the presentation of facts, figures, and factual conclusions as distinguished from the presentation of legal conclusions in respect to the facts and figures; or

(4) Pro se.

(c) At hearings and other proceedings before the Insurance Commissioner or before the duly authorized representative of the Insurance Commissioner, an employer who is not a natural person may appear only as follows:

(1) By an attorney duly licensed and admitted to the practice of law in this state;

(2) By a nonresident attorney duly licensed and admitted to practice before a court of record of general jurisdiction in another state or country or in the District of Columbia who has complied with the provisions of rule 8.0 - admission pro hac vice, West Virginia Supreme

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Court Rules for admission to the practice of law, as amended;

(3) By a member of the board of directors of a corporation or by an officer of the corporation for purposes of representing the interest of the corporation in the presentation of facts, figures, and factual conclusions as distinguished from the presentation of legal conclusions in respect to the facts and figures; or

(4) By a representative from an employer service company who has been recognized by the Insurance Commissioner as being qualified to represent an employer or who is an individual otherwise found to be qualified by the Insurance Commissioner to act as a representative. The representative shall participate in the presentation of facts, figures, and factual conclusions as distinguished from the presentation of legal conclusions in respect to the facts and figures.

(d) The Insurance Commissioner or his or her representative may require an individual appearing on behalf of a natural person or corporation to produce satisfactory evidence that he or she is properly qualified and authorized to appear pursuant to this section.

(e) The provisions of §23-1-13(b), (c), and (d) of this code shall not be construed as being applicable to proceedings before the office of judges or board of review pursuant to the provisions of §23-5-1 *et seq*. of this code.

(f) At the direction of a treating or evaluating psychiatrist or clinical doctoral-level psychologist, a psychiatric or psychological report concerning a claimant who is receiving treatment or is being evaluated for psychiatric or psychological problems may be withheld from the claimant. In that event, a summary of the report shall be compiled by the reporting psychiatrist or clinical doctoral-level psychologist. The summary shall be provided to the claimant upon his or her request. Any representative or attorney of the claimant must agree to provide the claimant with only the summary before the full report is provided to the representative or attorney for his or her use in preparing the claimant's case. The report shall only be withheld from the claimant in those instances where the treating or evaluating psychiatrist or clinical doctoral-level psychologist certifies that exposure to the contents of the full report is likely to cause serious harm to the claimant or is likely to cause the claimant to pose a serious threat of harm to a third party.

(g) In any matter arising under §23-1-1 *et seq.*, §23-2-1 *et seq.*, §23-2A-1 *et seq.*, §23-2C-1 *et seq.*, §23-4-1 *et seq.*, §23-4A-1, §23-4B-1 *et seq.*, and §23-5-1 *et seq*. of this code in which the Insurance Commissioner is required to give notice to a party, if a party is represented by an attorney or other representative, then notice to the attorney or other representative is sufficient notice to the party represented.

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