Workers' Comp

In Workers' Comp, the Topics We Talk about Will Continue to Broaden in 2020

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Anne Levins

Senior Vice President, Products & Analytics

When thinking about the future, one often looks back, determines what might not have been accomplished and adds things that haven't been attempted. In workers' comp, it can often feel like we deal with the same challenges over and over and are disappointed that things aren't moving fast enough. Some topics have been mainstays in the industry. Think of opioid use, misuse, and abuse; return-to-work programs; ergonomics and safety; new and improved approaches to case management. But not every discussion point has been around for years.

As I look back at some of the things that we discussed in 2019, several represent topics we haven't spent an inordinate amount of time on previously. These include opportunities for virtual connections with injured workers, growing popularity of combo kits, the need for disaster-response preparedness, and the regulatory environment in the area of marijuana. Well, 2020 is here. And while I don't think we will see an end to some of the topics the industry focused on in 2019, I do think there are a few we will be hearing about more than ever. Among them are:

- **PTSD:** We'll look at how post-traumatic stress affects first-responders and how it relates to workplace violence and crisis response.
- **Mental health:** We'll be seeing this more often as a primary and comorbid condition.
- **Drug formularies**: We'll likely see changes with regards to specific drug classifications, opioid-dispensing limitations, and more.

- **New technologies**: We'll examine how the latest and greatest tech tools can drive efficiency.
- **Medical advancements**: We'll be weighing what new treatments might supplant old ones.
- **Our changing workforce**: We'll consider how the multigenerational workforce might change the tide of injury rates and durations.
- **Legalization of marijuana**: We'll continue to follow how recreational legalization might ultimately affect employers and safety.
- **Analytics**: We'll dive even deeper into how we can use data to drive better outcomes.

While this list isn't exhaustive, it's an interesting beginning of what is on my mind as we kick off 2020. Hold tight, everyone. It's sure to be an interesting ride.



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