SAFETY, HEALTH, & WORKERS' COMPENSATION

OFFICE OF STATE HUMAN RESOURCES

Report to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations & Fiscal Research Division

Pursuant to Session Law 2015-241, Section 30.18(d)

February 1, 2016

State Human Resources

C. NEAL ALEXANDER, JR.
Director, State Human Resources

Nothing Compares
NORTH CAROLINA

Session Law 2015-241, Section 30.18 includes several amendments to existing laws with far-reaching ramifications for the State's administration of safety, health, and workers' compensation programs. The following is a brief summary of each subsection:

Session Law 2015-241, Section 30.18(a) appropriates a statewide reserve of $23,500,543 for State agency workers' compensation costs, with $2,000,000 designated for the closure of existing workers' compensation claims. This section also references a "line item" for workers' compensation expenditures.

Session Law 2015-241, Section 30.18(b) substantially amends Chapter 143, Article 63, previously titled "State Employees Workplace Requirements Program for Safety and Health". This amendment expands the Workplace Requirements Program to also include the State's workers' compensation program. The amendment also revises the definition of "state agency" covered by this Article to include the University of North Carolina system, thereby greatly enlarging the scope of covered activities to include many more state employees and facilities.

Most significantly, this amendment transfers responsibility for carrying out the State's workplace requirements from each individual state agency and the University system to the Office of State Human Resources (OSHR). OSHR is now required to establish a written program for State employee workplace safety, health, and workers' compensation and administer its requirements in accordance with NCGS §143-580 through NCGS §143-583. Responsibility for State agency safety and health committees is also transferred from each state agency to OSHR to ensure implementation of the State's workplace requirements for safety and workers' compensation as described in NCGS §143-584.

This amendment also specifically directs OSHR to adopt policies governing the State's workers' compensation program, monitor compliance with state workers' compensation law, and create guidelines for the delegation of administrative functions as necessary for the administration of the workers' compensation program to State agencies.

Session Law 2015-241, Section 30.18(d) directs OSHR to provide this report describing the implementation of Sections 30.18 (a) and (b) to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations and the Fiscal Research Division by February 1, 2016.

Session Law 2015-241, Section 30.18(e) directs the Department of Administration to reclassify three vacant positions within the Department and assign them to OSHR to staff the Workers' Compensation program for implementation of NCGS Chapter 143, Article 63 as amended.

OSHR Safety, Health and Workers' Compensation Division Structure

NCGS §143-581 Program goals

The OSHR Safety, Health and Workers' Compensation (SHWC) Division administers the State's programs pursuant to the guidelines in NCGS Chapter 143, Article 63. The Division's staff currently includes seven full time equivalent (FTE) positions. It is anticipated that the SHWC Division's staff will increase to ten FTE positions upon transfer of the three positions from the Department of Administration described in Session Law 2015-241, Section 30.18(e).

The following is a list of duties and responsibilities of the SHWC Division staff:

Oversight of Statewide Safety and Health Program, including:

- Consults with agencies/universities in the areas of safety, health and industrial hygiene
- Reviews agency safety policies/programs, researches and advises agencies on safety-related matters
- Audits agency/university and vendor performance with regard to adherence to safety activities
- Works in partnership with statewide safety professionals as part of the Leadership Health & Safety Team and the Statewide Safety & Health Steering Committee

Oversight of State Workers' Compensation Program, including:

- Administers all vendor contracts for workers' compensation-related services
- Directs claims management and administration practices via establishment of business processes for agencies/universities and vendors
- Monitors vendors' adherence to contract requirements via established performance measures
- Assists agencies/universities with proper claims handling
- Provides in-person and web-based training/education to agency/university employees
- Serves as on-call information resource for agency/university workers' compensation administrators
- Evaluates agency/university claims management practices as compared to established standards
- Monitors claim litigation and settlements
- Handles process for awarding Workers' Compensation Settlement Reserve Funds per Session Law 2015-241, Section 30.18(a)
- Identifies cost containment opportunities

Workers' Compensation Settlement Reserve Fund and Workers' Compensation Budget Line Item - Session Law 2015-241, Section 30.18(a)

Historically, State agencies have funded workers' compensation expenditures through lapsed salaries and transfers from other budget line items and have not maintained dedicated workers' compensation budget line items. Section 30.18(a) states:

> *"The Office of State Budget and Management shall distribute the remaining funds to State agencies to fund workers' compensation line items."*

The inclusion of this language is significant, as it contemplates that State agencies should establish specific workers' compensation budget line items.

Section 30.18(a) appropriates $23,500,543 for "*State agency workers' compensation costs*", the entirety of which is being distributed solely by the Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) "*based on a historical average of each agency's workers' compensation expenditures.*" As of December 31, 2015, 95% of these funds have been distributed to State agencies.

$2,000,000 Settlement Reserve Fund Allocation Process Administered by OSHR

Session Law 2015-241, Section 30.18(a) sets aside $2,000,000 for "*the closure of existing workers' compensation claims*." OSHR in conjunction with OSBM and the Office of State Controller has developed a detailed administrative process for the allocation of these funds, with the goal of settling claims that will result in the greatest potential future cost savings.

All state agencies and universities are eligible to apply for settlement funds on an individual, per claim basis. In November 2015, OSHR provided each agency/university with a list of potentially eligible claims for review. Many agencies/universities responded by providing OSHR with claims to add to or delete from this list. The agency application filing period opened on December 1, 2015. OSHR engages in weekly meetings to assess each Settlement Reserve Funds application individually and determine if any funds should be provided for claim settlement.

Below is the status of applications received and Settlement Reserve funds approved by OSHR as of January 25, 2016.

Total applications received	77
Total applications reviewed	38
Number of claims approved for Settlement Reserve Funds	30
Total dollar amount of approved Settlement Reserve Funds	$1,037,500

OSHR's decision making process for distributing these funds includes, at a minimum, assessment of the following factors and any other pertinent information to determine the potential future cost savings that would result from the settlement of an individual claim:

a. Employee's age and statutory life expectancy, based upon NCGS §8-46

b. Number of workers' compensation claims filed by the employee while employed by the State

c. Employee's pre-injury position title and job description

d. Employee's average weekly wage, weekly compensation rate, and whether injury qualified for salary continuation benefits

e. Length of employee's entitlement to ongoing workers' compensation disability benefits (if claim is not settled)

f. Documented efforts to return the employee to work

g. Employee's return-to-work potential

h. Employee's current medical condition related to the workers' compensation claim

i. Employee's comorbidities or other medical conditions unrelated to the workers' compensation claim, if applicable

j. Employee's projected future medical treatment related to the workers' compensation claim

k. Will the claim settlement include the employee's resignation, if still employed with the State?

l. Has the employee retired?

m. Is the employee eligible for or receiving Long-Term Disability benefits?

n. Is the employee currently receiving, has applied for, is appealing a denial, or plans to apply for Social Security Disability (SSDI) benefits in the near future?

o. Whether Medicare Set Aside Agreement (MSA) will be required and dollar amount to be included in the claim settlement, if already calculated

p. Prior Industrial Commission Orders, Opinions and Awards, Consent Agreements, or Consent Orders on record for the claim

q. Pending litigation and issues to be determined included on the Industrial Commission Form 33 Request for Hearing and/or Form 33R Response to Request for Hearing

r. Projected future litigation

s. Total dollar amount of expenditures already paid for the claim, including breakdown into separate amounts spent for indemnity, medical, and allocated expense costs

t. Total dollar amount of current claim reserves, including breakdown into separate amounts projected to be paid for future indemnity, medical, and allocated expenses

u. Projected total dollar amount of lifetime exposure for all potential future costs related to claim

v. Name of employee's attorney and whether the attorney is currently receiving an ongoing attorney's fee

OSHR receives the above data from the following sources: agency application form, current claim settlement evaluation prepared by the State's third party administrator, CorVel, and Attorney General's Settlement Approval Memo for all claims with settlements projected to exceed $74,999.00. OSHR also requests additional information from the agency or consults the claim file when needed to fully complete an individual claim assessment.

Accountability and Oversight Structure

NCGS §143-582, *Program Requirements*
NCGS §143-583, *Model Program; Technical Assistance; Reports*
NCGS §143-584, *State Agency Safety and Health Committees*

OSHR has established a substantial accountability and oversight structure with vendor and agency performance metrics including return to work and surveillance to ensure that State agencies/universities are in compliance with the State's Workplace Safety, Health, and Workers' Compensation Program described in NCGS §§143-582 through 143-584, as amended by Session Law 2015-241 Section 30.18(b), which state as follows:

§ 143-582. Program Requirements

The written program required under this Article shall describe at a minimum:

(1)   The methods to be used to identify, analyze, and control new or existing hazards, conditions, and operations.

(2)   How managers, supervisors, and employees are responsible for implementing the program, controlling accident-related expenditures, and how continued participation of management and employees will be established, measured, and maintained.

(3)   How the plan will be communicated to all affected employees so that they are informed of work-related physical, chemical, or biological hazards, and controls necessary to prevent injury or illness.

(4)   How managers, supervisors, and employees will receive training in avoidance of job-related injuries and health impairment.

(5)   How workplace accidents will be reported and investigated and how corrective actions will be implemented.

(6)   How safe work practices and rules will be communicated and enforced.

(7)   The safety and health training program that will be made available to employees.

(8)   How employees can make complaints concerning safety and health problems without fear of retaliation.

(9)   How employees will receive medical attention following a work-related injury or illness. (1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 994, s. 1.)

§143-583. Model Program; Technical Assistance; Reports

(a) The Office of State Human Resources shall:

(1)   Maintain a model program of safety and health requirements to guide State agencies in the development of their individual programs and in complying with the provisions of G.S. 95-148 and this Article.

(2)   Establish guidelines for the creation and operation of State agency safety and health committees.

(3)   Adopt policies that shall govern the administration of the workers' compensation program and monitor compliance with Chapter 97 of the General Statutes.

(4)   Establish guidelines for the delegation of certain administrative functions as necessary for the administration of the workers' compensation program to State agencies, as defined in this section.

(b) The Office of State Human Resources shall report by September 1, and annually thereafter, to the Joint legislative Commission on Governmental Operations on the safety, health, and workers' compensation activities of State agencies, compliance with this Article, and the fines levied against State against pursuant to Article 16 of Chapter 95 of the General Statutes.

§143-584. State Agency Safety and Health Committees

The Office of State Human Resources shall create, pursuant to guidelines adopted under (a) of G.S. 143-583, committees to perform workplace inspections, review injury and illness records, make advisory recommendations to the agency's managers, and perform other functions determined by the Office of State Human Resources to be necessary for the effective implementation of the State Employees Workplace Requirement Program for Safety and the workers' compensation program.

Workers' Compensation Program Oversight

Technical Assistance to Agency/University Workers' Compensation Administrators

OSHR's Workers' Compensation Program Managers are assigned to individual state agencies/universities and engage in the following activities to ensure the State's Workplace Requirements in NCGS §§143-582 through 143-584 are being achieved for workers' compensation.

1. Provide ongoing education and training.

    a. Develop and implement comprehensive training of agency workers' compensation administrators regarding new OSHR workers' compensation claims management standards and standard operating procedures (SOPs).

    b. Collaborate with OSHR Learning and Development staff to develop online training resources for employees, supervisors, agency workers' compensation administrators, Human Resources Directors/Human Resources Managers, and Safety Directors/Officers.

    c. Collaborate with OSHR Communications Division to provide information to all state employees regarding workers' compensation updates and best practices via OSHR's statewide quarterly publication, <u>The Resource</u>.

2. Provide ongoing communication to instill proper claims management.

    a. Serve as resource for agency workers' compensation administrator and vendor inquiries.

    b. Communicate with third party administrator, Department of Justice-Workers' Compensation Division, and others regarding claims management issues.

    c. Engage in internal communication to ensure safety and workers' compensation staff are meeting Division goals.

3. Monitor workers' compensation process for improvement.

    a. Review open claims for cost containment potential, fraud, abuse, compliance with claims management standards, when closure is appropriate, etc.

    b. Work directly with vendors to ensure contract compliance and improve performance.

    c. Gather data and design measures to analyze State Workers' Compensation Program performance.

The Workers' Compensation Program Managers have created Standard Operating Procedures, Job Aids, and other workers' compensation education resources specific to the State Workers' Compensation Program posted on the OSHR website at <u>www.workerscomp.nc.gov</u>.

Action Request Log

The following chart details some of the concerns continually raised by agencies/universities that are now being addressed by new vendor contract service, performance requirements and OSHR staff via an ongoing Action Request Log that will aid greatly in overall workers' compensation claims cost containment:

Agency Concerns/Problems	Improvements/Solutions
Inadequate vendor accountability	Quarterly performance measures with financial consequences for noncompliance
Lack of direction to third party administrator regarding how claims should be handled	Much more detailed adjuster claims handling requirements
Insufficient attention to Return To Work plans and agency programs	Return To Work related information will be closely tracked by third party administrator working with agency to implement Return To Work plan for each injured employee
Limited opportunity to address system-wide concerns with third party administrator	On-site third party administrator representative at OSHR
OSHR website includes few workers' compensation resources	Detailed claims management policies and resources on OSHR's Workers' Compensation webpage
Inadequate training and resources for supervisors, managers, and administrators	Comprehensive in-person classes, LMS training modules, Job Aids, and other resources for supervisors, managers, and administrators will be developed, implemented, and continuously updated
Agency concerns regarding third party administrator claims handling never addressed	OSHR receives, tracks, and maintains records of all issues/concerns raised by agencies, employees, etc., resolves problems, and reports results to all parties
Third party administrator may hire nurse case management, vocational rehabilitation, surveillance, etc. without agency approval	OSHR must approve all optional claim services before third party administrator may utilize them for any claim

Technical Assistance to Agency/University Safety Leaders

OSHR's Safety Director, Safety and Health Manager and State Safety Consultant provide consultation and assistance to all state agencies/universities and engage in the following activities to ensure the State's Workplace Requirements in NCGS §§143-582 through 143-584 are being achieved for safety and health:

1. Provide executive management with information related to the status of safety across the state
    a. Serve as a resource to the Health and Safety Leadership Team
    b. Serve as a resource to the Statewide Safety and Health Steering Committee
    c. Establish a Safety Working Team consisting of representatives from all Cabinet agencies
2. Provide ongoing communication to instill proper safety compliance and management
    a. Serve as a resource for agency and university safety leaders
    b. Engage in internal and external communications to ensure agency safety and health programs are meeting State goals
    c. Collaborate with OSHR's Communications Division to provide information to all state employees regarding safety and health updates and best practices via OSHR's statewide quarterly publication, The Resource

3. Monitor safety and health processes for improvement by reviewing newly develop agency safety scorecards for compliance with the State's Workplace Requirements in NCGS §§143-582 through 143-584

4. Employee Safety Training – A variety of free workplace safety courses are available through the BEACON Learning Management System (LMS). Courses may be assigned by supervisors. Below is a list of five modules that have been offered through OSHR and BEACON LMS as of December 28, 2015:

Training Class	Number of employees that have completed this training
Be a Hazard Hero	50,489
Avoiding Slips, Trips & Falls	55,916
Avoiding Sprains & Strains	1,811
Incident Investigation & Reporting Procedures (employee)	1,319
Incident Investigation & Reporting Procedures (supervisor)	2,064

Cost Containment

NCGS §143-582, *Program Requirements*
NCGS §143-583 *Model Program; Technical Assistance; Reports*

New Vendor Contracts Effective January 1, 2016

OSHR's main goal in developing new vendor contracts for the State Workers' Compensation Program was to achieve better control and accountability with vendors via stronger contract language and performance measures to ensure appropriate claims administration services are being provided to all agencies and universities.

The following vendors will be providing services to the State Workers' Compensation Program pursuant to these new contracts:

Claims Administration (Third Party Administrator), Medical, Pharmacy, Bill Review/Utilization Review:

- CorVel Corporation, Inc. (contractor representative onsite at OSHR)

Nurse Case Management and Vocational Rehabilitation vendors:

- Carolina Case Management & Rehabilitation Management, Inc.

- CorVel Corporation, Inc.

- Southern Rehabilitation, Inc.

Surveillance vendors:

- Advantage Surveillance, Inc.

- G4S Compliance and Investigations, Inc.

- DJG Investigative Services, Inc.

OSHR is projecting workers' compensation claims cost reduction under the new contracts totaling $1.7 million annually for the life of the contract for third party administrator (claims administration), medical, pharmacy, bill review/utilization review, nurse case management, vocational rehabilitation, and surveillance services.

Education/Training

OSHR's Workers' Compensation Program Managers are providing 14 interactive, experiential learning-based workers' compensation training sessions to approximately 350 state employees on the following dates from January through March 2016:

Location	Training Dates
Raleigh: Wake Tech Public Safety Education Campus	January 12; February 4, 17; March 1, 2
Goldsboro: Wayne Community College	January 21
Wilmington: Cape Fear Community College	January 28
Greenville: Pitt Community College	February 2
Jamestown: Guilford Technical Community College	February 9
Salisbury: Rowan Cabarrus Community College	February 10
Fayetteville: Fayetteville Technical Community College	February 16
Gastonia: Gaston Technical Community College	February 23
Asheville: Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College	February 24, 25

This training program, *Managing Your Claims: Part 1,* will cover the following topics critical to compliance with NCGS §§143-582 through 143-584:

1. Initial Injury Handling and Reporting
2. Incident Investigations
3. Claim Acceptance and Denial Decisions
4. Return to Work
5. Workers' Compensation Benefits, Leave, and Effect on Other Benefits
6. Claims Monitoring
7. Detecting Fraud and Abuse
8. Close Claims Timely and Fairly
9. Recording Workers' Compensation Actions in BEACON
10. Performance Measures

Managing Your Claims: Part 1 is targeted to workers' compensation administrators, supervisors, managers, and other human resources personnel that handle and manage workers' compensation claims to provide them with claims handling laws, procedures, and best practices. Following initial rollout, this program will be provided by OSHR on a quarterly basis to all new hires and others in need of this training.

OSHR staff is currently developing an advanced training class: *Managing Your Claims: Part 2* that will be provided statewide in October–November 2016.

In addition, training modules and resources are being added to the OSHR Workers' Compensation webpage, www.workerscomp.nc.gov, and the BEACON LMS. These resources include new FAQs and Standard Operating Procedures that will address in detail effective and efficient claims management.

Return to Work Program Implementation

Throughout FY 2016 and 2017, OSHR's Workers' Compensation Program Managers will be focused on ensuring each agency/university has a comprehensive and fully-implemented Return to Work Program. Agencies/universities are currently at varying stages of adoption of such programs.

Comprehensive Return to Work programs should be maintained in each agency to instill a "Return to Work Culture" in employees, supervisors, and management.

Major Agency/University Return to Work Program goals may be described as follows:

1. Maintaining a continuously updated list of light/modified duty and "make work" available for injured employees assigned temporary work restrictions that have not yet reached maximum medical improvement (MMI) for their injury

2. Detailed post (MMI) planning, including potential job accommodations, a labor market survey, and/or vocational rehabilitation, to begin immediately when an agency learns an injured employee will likely be issued permanent work restrictions related to their injury upon reaching maximum medical improvement

3. Ongoing education of all employees, supervisors, managers, and human resources personnel regarding Return-to-Work expectations

4. Ongoing measurement and assessment of the effectiveness and cost savings resulting from the agency/university Return to Work Program

Performance Metrics

NCGS §143-582, Program Requirements

OSHR will be providing each agency/university a Safety and Workers' Compensation scorecard to assist in evaluation of their safety programs and workers' compensation claims handling and management practices. This unified scorecard is designed to give a ready comparison of how state agencies and universities are performing with regard to their safety and workers' compensation programs. Agencies and universities are diverse in their functions, but the criteria contained in this scorecard is meant to provide an at-a-glance comparison to benchmarks across the state.

Agency/University Safety Program Performance Measures

1. **Written program that meets statutory requirements:**
   - Identifies, analyzes, and controls new or existing hazards, conditions, and operations
   - Communication and enforcement of safe work practices
   - Reporting and investigation of workplace hazards and accidents
   - Continued participation of managers, supervisors, and employees in safety program
   - Injured employee referral to medical treatment

2. **Agency safety committee that meets statutory requirements:**
   - Analyzes incidents/injuries
   - Conducts, documents, and is present at safety inspections

- Monitors agency training records to ensure compliance with regulatory training requirements
- Meets at least every quarter
- Makes written recommendations to agency head

Agency/University Workers' Compensation Performance Measures

1. **First Notice of Loss Reporting To Third Party Administrator Lag Time**:
   How many days between date of injury and date claim report to third party administrator is **completed**?

   a. Average Employee Lag: Days between actual date of injury and date of report to supervisor

   b. Average Manager Lag: Days between date of employee report to supervisor and date claim is first entered into third party administrator claims administration system

   c. Average First Notice of Loss Lag: Total days between actual date of injury and date claim is first entered into third party administrator system and put in suspended reporting queue

   d. Average Total Lag: Total days between actual date of injury and date claim is taken out of suspended queue and agency actually completes report to third party administrator claims administration system

2. **Return to Work Lag Time:**
   How many days between the authorized date of the injured employee's release to return to work (with light/modified/transitional duty restrictions or permanent restrictions) and actual date of injured employee's return to light/modified/transitional duty or permanent work with restrictions?

   a. Persons returned to work within 1-30 calendar days of release: _____

   b. Persons returned to work within 31-60 calendar days of release: _____

   c. Persons returned to work within 61-90 calendar days of release: _____

   d. Persons returned to work within 91-180 calendar days of release: _____

3. **Workers' Compensation Leave Actions completed within a monthly payroll cycle:**
   Percentage of workers' compensation leave of absence actions recorded as of the effective date Or shortly thereafter to ensure employee receives correct salary and workers' compensation lost wages benefits and simultaneously decreasing likelihood of overpayments.

4. **Number of Injuries Reported in Agencies/Universities:**
   Injuries report including number, body part, and injury type for specified time period. This report will also include an indicator for persons that have filed multiple claims while employed by the state.

5. **Active Claims by Agency/Job/Injury Type as of a certain date:**
   Claims report including open claims listed by agency, position, and injury type.

SAMPLE AGENCY/UNIVERSITY SAFETY AND WORKERS' COMPENSATION SCORECARD

Workplace Safety Requirements Implementation	Compliance
Has the agency established a written State Employee Workplace Requirements Program for Safety and Health which includes:	
• Methods to be used to identify, analyze, and control new or existing hazards, conditions, and operations;	
• How managers, supervisors, and employees are responsible for implementing the program, controlling accident-related expenditures, and how continued participation of management and employees will be established, measured, and maintained;	
• How the plan will be communicated to all affected employees so that they are informed of work-related physical, chemical, or biological hazards, and controls necessary to prevent injury or illness;	
• How managers, supervisors, and employees will receive training in avoidance of job related injuries and health impairment;	
• How workplace accidents will be reported and investigated and how corrective actions will be implemented;	
• How safe work practices and rules will be communicated and enforced;	
• Safety and health training programs that will be made available to employees;	
• How employees can make complaints concerning safety and health problems without fear of retaliation;	
• How employees will receive medical attention following a work-related injury or illness.	
Is there an agency safety committee established which:	
• Reviews incidents involving work-related fatalities, injuries, illnesses or near-misses;	
• Reviews employee complaints regarding safety and health hazards;	
• Analyzes the agency's work injury and illness statistical records;	
• Conducts inspections or ensures safety and health inspections of the worksites are conducted and documented at least annually as required by regulatory codes or standards;	
• Ensures responses to complaints regarding safety and/or health hazards are provided and addresses process for corrective action;	
• Ensures that interviews with employees are conducted in conjunction with inspections of the workplace;	
• Ensures that agency's training records are reviewed to ensure compliance with regulatory training requirements;	
• Conducts meetings at least once every three months. Maintains written minutes of such meetings and sends copy to each committee member. Copy of minutes shall be posted to ensure availability to all employees in the workplace;	
• Designates Employee Safety and Health Representative(s) to accompany representatives from regulatory agencies (i.e., NC Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Human Services, NC Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Division, NC Department of Insurance, NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, etc.) during environmental, safety and health inspections of the workplace;	
• Makes written recommendations (e.g., for elimination of hazards and improvement in occupational safety and health) on behalf of the Committee to the agency head.	
State Workers' Compensation Program Agency/University Performance Measures	**Compliance**
• First Notice of Loss Reporting To Third Party Administrator Lag Time	
• Return to Work Lag Time	
• Workers' Compensation Leave Actions completed within a monthly payroll cycle	
• Number of Injuries Reported	
• Active Claims by Agency/Job/Injury Type	

Conclusion

OSHR will continue to optimize available resources to ensure Safety, Health and Workers' Compensation program requirements are effectively and efficiently realized as described in this Report. OSHR is actively collaborating with vendors and all state agencies and universities to meet statutory program requirements while simultaneously decreasing costs and improving outcomes.

The Workers' Compensation Settlement Reserve Fund is aiding greatly in closing open Workers' Compensation claims and facilitating anticipated future cost avoidance. OSHR looks forward to providing ongoing leadership in coordinating these efforts with all state agencies and universities by overseeing program implementation, tracking accountability via performance measures, and providing training opportunities and online resources for employees at all levels.