

Registration Now Open!

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AGENDA

Wednesday, September 23, 2026

1 p.m. Conference Registration Begins!
The Burrow

1:00 – 5:00 Exhibitor Set Up
Gulfview Ballroom I & II

Work Comp Track

Gulfview Ballroom III

2:00 – 3:00 **Mississippi Workers' Compensation by the Numbers: Trends, Challenges, and What's Ahead**
Mark Formby, Chairman
Beth Harkins, Commissioner
Mark Henry, Commissioner
Preston Williams, Director of Self-Insurance
Mississippi Workers' Compensation Commission

In this comprehensive review of workers' compensation in Mississippi, the Mississippi Workers' Compensation Executive Staff will discuss key findings from the Commission's 2025 Annual Report, highlighting claim trends, injury patterns, industry data, litigation activity, and other developments affecting employers, insurers, and self-insured entities across the state.

In addition to the statistical review, Commission leadership will provide updates on important initiatives and programs within the agency, including developments in Mississippi's self-insurance community, the work of the MWCC Advisory Council, and ongoing efforts to support Kids' Chance of Mississippi, offering attendees a unique opportunity to hear directly from leadership regarding current trends, priorities, and the future direction of workers' compensation in Mississippi.

3:00 – 4:00 **An Hour with the Judges: Practical Updates from the Bench**
Stewart Lee, Esq., Administrative Law Judge
Jenny Nicaud, Esq., Administrative Law Judge
Mississippi Workers' Compensation Commission

Join Mississippi Workers' Compensation Commission Administrative Law Judges Stewart Lee and Jenny Nicaud for an hour of practical insight into issues shaping today's workers' compensation system.

Judge Lee will discuss how to prepare a work comp case for hearing, including what ALJs look for in well-organized records, effective witness testimony, meaningful stipulations, and professional conduct throughout the claims process. He will also provide a brief overview of the principles that guide judges and practitioners, including judicial impartiality, ex parte communications, confidentiality, and professionalism.

Judge Nicaud will explore two emerging issues facing the workers' compensation community: the increasing use of artificial intelligence by pro se claimants and the growing role of mental health considerations in workers' compensation claims. She will share observations from the bench, discuss practical implications for employers and practitioners, and offer insight into how these evolving issues are influencing today's claims environment.

4:00 – 5:00 **Age Matters: Understanding Injury Severity, Recovery, and Return-to-Work Outcomes**
Christina Johnson, President, JMS Consulting

As the workforce continues to age, employers are seeing a measurable shift in workers' compensation trends, including fewer frequent injuries among experienced employees, but higher severity, longer recovery times, and increased medical costs when injuries do occur. This session will explore how age impacts injury type, claim duration, and return-to-work outcomes, and will identify strategies employers can implement to manage risk while supporting a multigenerational workforce.

Health Benefits Track

Gulfview Ballroom IV

2:00 – 3:00 **Healthcare Cost Containment Solutions for the Self-Insured Employer: A Closer Look**
Chris Choate, National VP of Business Development, Drex
Gordon Larson, Vice President - Health Plan Solutions, AMPS
Jimmy Madeksho, Vice President, Southeast Region, AMPS

For self-insured employers, controlling healthcare costs requires more than simply reacting to rising expenses, it demands a proactive, long-term strategy focused on improving plan performance while maintaining access to quality care. Effective cost containment involves evaluating every component of the health plan and identifying opportunities to reduce unnecessary spending, improve transparency, and maximize value for both the employer and plan participants.

This session will explore a variety of cost-containment tools and strategies available to self-funded employers, including Reference-Based Pricing, Medical Bill Review, Direct-to-Employer Contracting, Captive Programs, Pharmacy Benefit Management, post-pay auditing, and claims recovery initiatives.

3:00 – 4:00 **Beyond the PBM: Strategies for Managing Prescription Drug Costs in Self-Funded Health Plans**
Callie Roberson, PharmD, Area Vice President, Pharmacy Benefit Consulting, Gallagher Benefit Services

Prescription drug costs continue to be one of the most significant and unpredictable expenses facing self-funded health plans. From specialty medications and GLP-1 therapies to evolving Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) regulations, employers are under increasing pressure to balance access to quality care with the need to control costs.

This session will provide a practical overview of the factors driving pharmacy spend and explore strategies employers can use to improve pharmacy plan performance. Attendees will learn about plan design considerations, direct-to-consumer purchasing options, alternative funding approaches, member advocacy tools, and emerging vendor solutions that can help reduce prescription drug expenses. The presentation will also include a brief update on recent state and federal PBM developments and what they may mean for employer-sponsored health plans.

Designed specifically for employers, this session focuses on practical, real-world approaches that can help organizations make informed decisions while managing one of the fastest-growing areas of healthcare spending.

4:00 – 5:00

From Data to Behavior – Turning Insights Into Action

Thomas Hodges, Regional Director of Financial Consulting
Michelle Marshall, Regional Leader, Health & Performance Consulting
HUB International | Fox Everet

Great data means nothing if it doesn't change behavior, and great engagement strategies fail without knowing where to aim them. This session bridges plan analytics with real-world engagement strategy: how to read claims and financial data to find what's actually driving cost, then translate that insight into point solutions, communication, and clinical engagement strategies that move the needle.

6 – 7:30 p.m.

Welcome Reception in **The Networking Arcade** Exhibit Hall
Gulfview Ballrooms I & II

Thursday, September 24, 2026

7 – 12 p.m.

Registration Desk Open

The Burrow

7:15 – 7:30

Sunrise Devotional

The Dunes Terrace
Gil Powell, First Baptist Church Newton, Mississippi

7:30 – 8:15

Breakfast with Exhibitors in The Networking Arcade

Gulfview Ballroom I & II

8:15 – 12 noon

General Session

Gulfview Ballroom III & IV

8:15 – 8:30

Welcome and Annual MASI Membership Meeting

Anissa Young, President, MASI Board of Directors

8:30 – 9 a.m.

The Legislative Rewind and What's Next

Jason White, Speaker of the House, Mississippi House of Representatives

Join Mississippi Speaker of the House Jason White for an insider's look at the latest developments from the Mississippi Legislature and a preview of the issues likely to shape the year ahead. Speaker White will provide updates on key legislative actions, discuss emerging policy priorities, and offer his perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing Mississippi's business community, employers, and citizens. Don't miss this opportunity to hear directly from one of the state's most influential leaders as he shares insights on the legislative landscape and what may be on the horizon when lawmakers return to the Capitol.

9 – 10 a.m.

No More Stigma: Supporting Mental Health and Recovery at Work

Dr. Stephen Taylor, Medical Director, Pathway Healthcare
Former Medical Director of the National Basketball Association

Dr. Katherine Pannel, Medical Director, Ambetter from Magnolia Health

Mental health conditions and substance use disorders often intersect in ways that can significantly impact employees, families, and the workplace. Whether recovering from a workplace injury, managing a chronic health condition, caring for an ill loved one, or facing other life challenges, employees may experience depression, anxiety, isolation, or emotional distress that can increase the risk of substance misuse. Unfortunately, fear of judgment and workplace stigma often prevent individuals from seeking the help they need.

This session will explore the complex relationship between behavioral health and substance use disorders and the role employers, supervisors, claims professionals, and colleagues play in supporting recovery. Workplace injuries, prolonged absences from work, chronic pain, and prescription medications all can contribute to mental health challenges and addiction risks. Attendees will learn practical strategies for recognizing warning signs, encouraging early intervention, fostering supportive workplace cultures, and reducing the stigma associated with both mental illness and addiction. Through greater understanding and awareness, organizations can help create an environment where employees feel safe asking for help, accessing treatment, and successfully returning to productive and healthy lives.

10 – 11 a.m.

Break with Exhibitors in The Networking Arcade

Gulfview Ballroom I & II

11– 12 noon

General Session Resumes

Gulfview Ballroom III & IV

The Rising Cost of Healthcare: What's Driving Health Insurance Premiums?

Aaron Sisk, Plan President and CEO
Ambetter from Magnolia Health

Healthcare costs continue to rise at a pace that challenges employers, employees, and health plans alike. From increasing hospital and physician costs to specialty medications, chronic disease, workforce shortages, medical technology, and changing government regulations, numerous factors are contributing to higher healthcare spending and rising insurance premiums.

This session will examine the key drivers behind today's healthcare costs and explain how these trends impact employers, health plans, and consumers. Participants will also receive an update on the current

health insurance marketplace, recent legislative and regulatory developments, and emerging issues that may influence healthcare costs in the years ahead.

Designed for employers and insurance professionals, this presentation provides practical insight into the forces shaping today's healthcare environment and the challenges organizations face in providing affordable, sustainable health benefits.

12 – 1 p.m. **Lunch with Exhibitors in The Networking Arcade**
Gulfview Ballroom I & II

2 – 4 p.m. **Cornhole Tournament**
Gulfview Ballroom I & II

5 – 7 p.m. **Drawdown Party**
Gulfview Ballroom I & II

6 p.m. Presentation of the Friend of MASI Award
6:15 p.m. Drawdown Begins

Friday, September 25, 2026

7:15 – 7:30 a.m. **Sunrise Devotional**
The Dunes Terrace
Maury White, PF Transport & Language Services

7:30 – 8:15 **Breakfast with Exhibitors in The Networking Arcade**
Gulfview Ballroom I & II

8:15 – 11:15 a.m. **General Session**
Gulfview Ballroom III & IV

8:15 – 8:45 a.m. **PBM Pricing Models: Charting the Course to Transparency**
Raj Shiwmgal, Vice President of Sales for National Accounts, Liviniti

The pharmacy benefit management (PBM) marketplace is evolving rapidly as new specialty medications, increasing prescription drug costs, and heightened legislative scrutiny continue to reshape the industry. For employers, understanding how PBMs operate and how they are compensated has never been more important.

This session will provide a practical overview of today's PBM pricing models, including traditional, transparent, and hybrid approaches, while explaining the responsibilities PBMs perform in managing prescription drug benefits. Attendees will gain a clearer understanding of the various revenue streams that exist within the PBM marketplace and why transparency has become a central issue for employers, policymakers, and plan sponsors.

The presentation will also explore how transparent PBM arrangements can support an employer's fiduciary responsibilities by providing greater access to data, improved alignment of incentives,

and a clearer understanding of pharmacy benefit costs. Participants will leave with a stronger foundation for evaluating PBM contracts and asking the right questions to ensure their pharmacy benefit strategy aligns with the goals of their health plan.

8:45 – 9:45 a.m.

An Update from the MID: Navigating Air and Ground Ambulance Charges in Today's Insurance Environment

Mike Chaney, Commissioner, Mississippi Insurance Department

David Browning, Deputy Commissioner, Mississippi Insurance Department

Ryan Blakeney, Director, Consumer Services Division Mississippi Insurance Department

Ambulance costs continue to generate concern for employers, health plans, insurers, and consumers alike. David Browning and Ryan Blakeney of the Mississippi Insurance Department will examine the growing use and cost of air and ground ambulance services, consumer protections available through Mississippi's balance billing laws and the federal No Surprises Act, and the impact of Mississippi's out-of-network ground ambulance reimbursement requirements.

In addition, the presenters will provide an overview of the Mississippi Insurance Department's Consumer Services Division, highlighting the resources and assistance available to Mississippi consumers and employers. The session will also include updates on current trends affecting the homeowner and automobile insurance markets, along with other regulatory developments impacting the insurance industry.

9:45 – 10:15 a.m.

Break to give away exhibitor door prizes. Must be present to win!

10:15 – 11:15 a.m.

When the Weather Turns Dangerous: Ice Storm 2026

Extreme Conditions, Storm Response, and Workers' Compensation Risk

Gerald Gordon, Vice President, Safety and Loss Control, Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi

In January 2026, a severe ice storm struck Mississippi, forcing electric cooperative linemen into prolonged restoration efforts under some of the most hazardous working conditions imaginable. Icy terrain, freezing temperatures, limited visibility, fatigue, and live electrical exposure combined to create a high-risk environment where injuries were not theoretical but real and consequential.

Gerald Gordon with the Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi will walk attendees through their real-world response to the January 2026 ice storm, sharing firsthand experiences from the field, including the types of injuries sustained, near-miss incidents, and the operational pressures that accompany emergency restoration work. He will examine how extreme weather fundamentally changes workplace risk, increases injury severity, and complicates medical response and workers' compensation outcomes.

11:15 a.m.

**Cash Prize Giveaway for Completing Exhibitor Game Piece
Adjourn**