

Doing Disability Assessments for Extra Income

By Lewis C. Rose, MD

In Texas, there is an organized approach to the assessment of disability (impairment) for ongoing Worker's Compensation. Doctors are expected to provide a totally independent assessment of the injured worker (claimants). Physicians with appropriate skills are being sought by Churchill Evaluation Centers.

A physician who decides to join the cadre of examiners is required to attend a two-day course on evaluation methods and standards, and to pass the test of proficiency. Later, having achieved proficiency, the doctor is then eligible to be appointed as a "designated doctor" under the Texas Worker's Compensation Act. While functioning as such a doctor, the physician is granted immunity from liability by the state.

The state assigns cases to the physician on a rotational basis and the physician can utilize any of the fifty Texas Churchill centers to examine the claimants. At each center, there will be a well-equipped examining room and appropriate staff. Injured workers will arrive by appointment. The physician will be able to review all the relevant notes, x-rays or other reports before starting the examination. After the exam, the doctor then dictates clinical findings.

Through Churchill, the physician controls the schedule and workload. Cases are seen anytime in a two to three week timeframe. Volume can be enhanced by choosing more than one center. For example, a San Antonio physician may want to drive to centers in surrounding counties, such as New Braunfels or San Marcos or may prefer to fly to major cities, such as Dallas or Houston.



Each case takes about an hour. Everything the physician needs is provided at the Churchill Evaluation Center. The doctor usually receives \$300-\$400 per case. The state provides immunity. Physicians must have a Texas medical license but an active practice is not required. It is an excellent way to generate alternative income without hassle.

This information was supplied by Melissa Starnes, Director of Churchill Evaluation Centers, when interviewed by Dr. Rose. Interested physicians may contact her at (817) 861-4600 or by e-mail at director@churchilleval.com.