WAC 296-23-302 Definitions. Approved independent medical examination (IME) provider - A licensed provider or firm whose credentials are approved to conduct an independent medical examination, rating evaluation, or provide IME associated services including, but not limited to, file preparation, scheduling of examinations, and processing billing. An approved IME provider is assigned a unique provider number.

Case progress examination - An examination requested for an accepted condition because:

(a) A proper and necessary treatment plan, per the definition of "proper and necessary" found in WAC 296-20-01002, is not in place; or

(b) The treatment plan has stalled or been completed without resulting in objective or functional improvement for physical conditions, or clinically meaningful signs of improvement for mental health conditions.

Department - For the purpose of this section, department means the department of labor and industries industrial insurance workers' compensation state fund and self-insured programs.

Direct patient care - For the purpose of meeting the qualifications of an independent medical examination (IME) provider, direct patient care means face-to-face contact with the worker for the purpose of evaluation and management of care that includes, but is not limited to:

- History taking and review of systems;
- Physical examination;
- Medical decision making;
- Coordination of care with other providers and agencies.

This does not include time spent in independent medical examinations.

Impairment rating examination - An examination to determine whether or not the injured/ill worker has any permanent impairment(s) as a result of the industrial injury or illness after the worker has reached maximum medical improvement. An impairment rating may be conducted by a qualified attending provider, a medical consultant, or an approved examiner. An impairment rating may be a component of an IME.

Independent medical examination (IME) - An objective medical-legal examination requested (by the department or self-insurer) to establish medical findings, opinions, and conclusions about a worker's physical condition. These examinations may only be conducted by department-approved examiners.

Independent medical examination (IME) provider - A firm, partnership, corporation, or individual licensed doctor (examiner) who has been approved and given an independent medical examination (IME) provider number by the department to perform IMEs.

Medical director - A licensed provider and approved IME examiner in the firm, partnership, corporation or other legal entity responsible to provide oversight on quality of independent medical examinations, impairment ratings and reports.

Medical Examiners' Handbook - A handbook developed by the department containing department policy and information to assist providers who perform independent medical examinations and impairment rating examinations.

Patient related services - Patient related services are defined as one or more of the following professional activities:

- Direct patient care;
- Locum tenens;
- Clinical consultations for attending providers;

• Clinical instruction of medical, osteopathic, dental, podiatry, or chiropractic students and/or residents;

• On-call emergency services;

• Volunteer clinician providing direct patient care services in their specialty.

Provider number - A unique number(s) assigned to a provider by the department of labor and industries. The number identifies the provider and is linked to a tax identification number that has been designated by the provider for payment purposes. A provider may have more than one provider number assigned by the department.

Suspension - A department action during which the provider is approved by the department but not available to accept referrals.

Temporarily unavailable - Provider is approved by the department but is temporarily unavailable to accept referrals. Temporarily unavailable applies at the provider's request for personal reasons or by the department as part of an administrative action. Provider remains unavailable until the issue is resolved.

Termination - The permanent removal of a provider from the list of approved IME examiners. All IME provider numbers assigned to the examiner are inactivated.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 51.04.020, 51.04.030, and 51.36.010. WSR 25-11-071, s 296-23-302, filed 5/20/25, effective 7/1/25. Statutory Authority: RCW 51.04.020, 51.04.030, and 51.36.070. WSR 22-07-110, § 296-23-302, filed 3/23/22, effective 4/23/22. Statutory Authority: RCW 51.04.020, 51.04.030, 51.32.112, 51.32.114, 51.32.055, 51.36.060, 51.36.070. WSR 13-03-129, § 296-23-302, filed 1/22/13, effective 2/25/13. Statutory Authority: RCW 51.32.055, 51,32,112 [51.32.112], 51.32.114, 51.36.060, and 51.36.070. WSR 09-24-085, § 296-23-302, filed 11/30/09, effective 3/1/10; WSR 04-04-029, § 296-23-302, filed 1/27/04, effective 3/1/04.]