

BILL 47 AND MEDICAL REVIEW PANELS

Who benefits from changes to medical review panels?

The workers' compensation system is the product of a special compromise between workers and employers—one that is nearly a century old in Alberta. It is not a system designed around an “us versus them” approach, but rather “we’re all in this together”. Bill 47 threatens to radically alter workers' role in health and safety oversight. **Medical review panels will also be dismantled with the goal of saving government expenses rather than compensating injured workers.**

Before Bill 47	After Bill 47
Medical panels are used by the workers' compensation system to provide an impartial, independent decision-making process to resolve disagreements in medical opinion that arises between workers and the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB).	The medical panels would be abolished. Instead, the WCB would assume responsibility for compiling a roster of physicians to conduct medical examinations as directed by the WCB.
The Medical Panel Commissioner oversees the establishment and conduct of medical panels.	The Lieutenant Governor may appoint a Medical Panels Commissioner. The role of the <i>Deputy</i> Medical Panels Commissioner is abolished.
The panels are comprised of physicians practising in the areas of medicine that are under review.	The requirement to have a case conference before referring a matter to a medical panel is abolished.

What's next?

This factsheet only describes some of the changes in Bill 47. We will be providing more information on these issues and others regularly over the next few months. On top of the radical changes to local union administration passed in Bill 32, Bill 47 is another government attack on our rights at work. Visit unifor.org/alberta to learn more.

