

LABOR CONNECTION

Fall 2024

Fighting Health Care Fraud: Special Investigations Department

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois recognizes the importance of getting in front of fraud-related issues by identifying fraud, waste and abuse trends as well as nationwide "hotspots" for fraudulent activity. We proactively monitor, detect and mitigate FWA and are committed to protecting and preserving the integrity and availability of health care resources for our members, clients and business partners by maintaining a comprehensive FWA Plan.

Our mission is to protect and preserve the integrity and availability of health care resources for our clients and members. We accomplish this with our Special Investigations Department teams comprised of medical doctors, nurses, certified coders/auditors, data analysts, insurance experts, attorneys and former law enforcement personnel. Our investigation teams maintain a comprehensive fraud,

waste and abuse program and pursue actions designed to correct the inappropriate billing.

In 2019, for instance, after a hotline complaint for excessive billing, we launched an investigation of a Chicago-based chiropractor who was operating two businesses in the area. We referred the provider to law enforcement and the federal investigators found that the chiropractor submitted fraudulent claims to BCBSIL for services that were not provided to the patients.

The chiropractor falsified medical records and other documents. This resulted in about \$1.3 million in fraudulent billing. After a two-week trial, a jury convicted the chiropractor on all nine counts of health care fraud. The chiropractor is scheduled to be sentenced later this year and faces up to 10 years in federal prison for each count as well as court ordered restitution.

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Someone You Should Know



Meet Michael Wainscott, CPA, Asst. Fund Administrator, Teamsters Local 731 I. B. of T., Health and Welfare/Pension Funds

As a hoopsters fan born and raised in the heart of Indiana basketball country,

Michael Wainscott is a Hoosier with a natural inclination to aim high. His favorite movie: Hoosiers. His favorite basketball player: former NBA superstar Larry Bird, a fellow Indiana native.

Michael holds the record at his high school, LaPorte High School in Indiana, with 106 consecutive free throws made during basketball practice. He played basketball in college at his alma mater, St. Xavier University in Chicago, where he was named first team All-Conference, team captain and MVP. He led the conference in free-throw shooting at 89.7% as a senior while only missing 4 attempts.

Paying it forward

Michael credits his college team experience for the strong leadership and managerial skills he possesses, and he now pays it forward in his post-academic journey. After graduation, he spent 10 years working as an accountant with the public accounting firm Bansley & Kiener, LLP. While there, he was involved deeply in the Taft Hartley multi-employer employee benefit space and earned his CPA designation.

He later joined his father-in-law in owning and managing four family-owned daycare centers located in the Western suburbs of Chicago. The daycare centers, which employed more than 100 employees, provided Michael with the opportunity to further improve his business management skills in order to successfully grow the family business over a 10-year period. The daycare centers also provided an excellent opportunity for his children to grow and learn in a group environment.

Teamsters Local 731

After they sold the daycare centers, Michael acted on an opportunity and was hired as the Fund Comptroller at Teamsters Local 731 located in Burr Ridge, IL. He had the pleasure of working with his Teamsters boss and mentor, Rich Clarson, for six years before he decided to retire. Rich was a great leader and teacher to him. Michael became Asst. Fund Administrator on Jan. 1, 2024, where he serves approximately 4,200 participants and 12,000 lives.

Michael has been in the process of hiring and training newly hired fund office staff members after Teamsters Local 731 experienced the natural progression of normal staff retirements. He is focused on ensuring members and their families receive the highest quality customer service. He also focuses on exploring new, innovative ideas that better serve members and assists his team with improving the Fund's efficiency.

He feels it is a privilege to represent the members of the Union and does not take the job lightly. He values the culture of hard-working, conscientious people who want to serve their fellow Union members. He has an outstanding team that he enjoys working with each and every day.

Private life

Michael lives in Oswego with his wife, Kristen, whom he met in college. Michael was the basketball player, and Kristen was the valedictorian pom pom girl. They have been happily married 25 years and have three children who are involved in college sports. Will played basketball at Concordia University Chicago in River Forest; Collin plays basketball at St. Ambrose in Davenport, Iowa, and Elle will play soccer at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb next year.

Michael enjoys attending sporting events and spending time with his family and friends. He also enjoys watching college basketball and Notre Dame football games, as well as supporting his Chicago teams – the Bears, Bulls, White Sox, and Cubs. Michael loves his music, too, and his tastes are about as eclectic as they come – rock, heavy metal, rap, reggae, country and the 80's.



Apprentice Program: **Midwest Operating Engineers**

Midwest Operating Engineers (Local 150's Apprenticeship and Skill Improvement Program in Wilmington is impressive by any measure.

Situated on 300-plus acres, the 342,000-square-foot William E. Dugan Training Center features an indoor training area, more than 200 pieces of heavy equipment, 30 classrooms, construction material testing lab, state-of-the-art welding facility, equipment simulator lab and a 200-seat auditorium.

Largest construction local in the country

MOE is the largest construction local in the country. Its cutting-edge skill-training program is capable of training both apprentices and journey workers. Open year-round, the site has instructors available six days a week. The local has 40 full-time instructors and, last year, 16 seasonal instructors.

There are four apprenticeship programs: Local 150 Heavy Equipment Operators, Heavy Equipment Technician, Geothermal Well Drill Operator, and Construction Building Inspector. All are four-plus-year programs; only the heavy-equipment technician program is five-plus years.

Valuable veteran oversight for new members

Overseeing all of this is Apprenticeship Coordinator, **George Antos**. George is a 35-year Local 150 veteran member who began in 1989. He worked for several different contractors on the "dirt side" and was a heavy-equipment operator and a certified crane operator.

Ensuring futures throughout their journeys

According to George, the trades are a great way to make a living. And the best part of being a member of Local 150: Members choose their trade and everything is free. Other than a \$25 application fee, there are no other expenses for an apprentice. In addition to unbelievable benefits, members can take as much training as they wish. The more equipment a member gets trained and certified on, the more employable they become.

For George, he has the best job in the world being able to train new people so that they can support their families. Each of the four programs has its own unique track with mandatory on-the-job training and class work. As each apprentice fulfills the requirements, they move to the next level with a yearly bump in pay.

Demand is strong

Last fall the program had up to 5,000 applicants. There is no entrance exam. The initial evaluation consists of some classroom and hands-on exercises as well as an oral interview. Members are accepted into the program as demand dictates.

Applications are accepted year-round for heavy-equipment technicians, geothermal well drill operators, and construction building inspectors. Heavy-equipment operator applications are accepted in October.

There are currently more than 1,000 apprentices in the program. As the average age of operators increases, there is a big demand to recruit the next generation at high schools, colleges and job fairs. Social media is an excellent method to get the word out, he says.

Based on the programs in place, Local 150 is going to have the best-trained members and they'll be ready for any challenge.

Fighting Health Care Fraud: Special Investigations Department (CONTINUED)

Last year, we referred 248 cases to law enforcement or government agencies. Many of these cases are ongoing. As of this writing, authorities secured 23 convictions based on these referrals.

BCBSIL's Special Investigation Department's FWA services are a value-added benefit — no extra fee is charged to the customer. The rare exception may be litigation related to recovery. On the very rare occasion when BCBSIL cannot

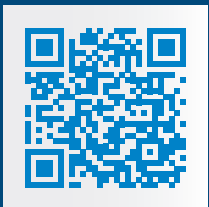
reach a settlement agreement with a provider to recover overpayments, BCBSIL may utilize outside counsel on a contingency arrangement to assist with the recovery.

We are here to help our clients preserve the value of the benefits they offer to their members. By fighting fraud, waste and abuse, we also help to slow the rising cost of health care nationwide and restore hope in the value of care members receive.

This and That

Congratulations on these recent retirements, work anniversary

Congratulations to Jack Witt (Teamsters Local 705) and Rich Clarson (Teamsters 731 Funds) on their retirement! Also, we want to congratulate Heat & Frost Insulators Local 17 on their 125th Anniversary!



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Diabetes Treatment and GLP-1s

Diabetes treatment isn't cut and dry, especially with the rise of GLP-1s. Here's some clear and concise advice.

You may be hearing a lot about GLP-1s lately. Whether it's in the news, through social media or directly from your members, the interest in these cutting-edge drugs as a treatment for type 2 diabetes — and, separately, for weight loss — has skyrocketed.

Diabetes is a chronic condition affecting more than 37 million Americans. Most of those cases are type 2 diabetes. As with any chronic condition, management of type 2 diabetes is multifaceted. GLP-1s can be an important tool in managing this condition.

What are GLP-1s

Glucagon-like peptide-1 agonists (GLP-1) are a class of medications that can be extremely effective at reducing blood sugar and A1C levels for those with type 2 diabetes. They can also lower overall body weight, blood pressure and lipid levels.¹ But these drugs also come with a high price tag.

In fact, GLP-1 agonists are the fastest growing class of diabetes medicines with a 36% five-year compound annual growth rate and accounting for 16% of prescriptions in 2023.² Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois recommends that GLP-1s

should be used in coordination with other treatment strategies, like healthy eating, exercise, preventive care and more.

Total care management

Members with type 2 diabetes may need support to understand how GLP-1s might fit into their personal treatment plan and what to expect when taking this type of treatment. In a recent study, only one-third of people who started a GLP-1 medication were still taking it at the one-year mark.³

Members need to discuss GLP-1 medication with their doctors to determine the drawbacks and whether it is good for them, individually.

Learn more

Groups with Prime Therapeutics as their pharmacy benefit manager should contact their account executive for more information. Groups without Prime should discuss coverage and management strategies with their pharmacy benefit manager.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois contracts with Prime Therapeutics® to provide pharmacy benefit management and related other services. BCBSIL, as well as several independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans, has an ownership interest in Prime Therapeutics. [MyPrime.com](https://www.myprime.com) is an online resource offered by Prime Therapeutics.

1. Glucagon-Like Peptide 1 Receptor Agonists for Type 2 Diabetes, Diabetes Spectrum, Aug. 2017

2. IQVIA Institute for Human Data Science, The Use of Medicines in the U.S. 2024: Usage and Spending Trends and Outlook to 2028, April 2024

3. Real-World Analysis of Glucagon-Like Peptide 1 Agonist (GLP-1a) Obesity Treatment One Year Cost-Effectiveness and Therapy Adherence, Prime Therapeutics, July 2023



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