Help spread the word about coverage and care for COVID and Long-Haul COVID under WA State Workers’ Compensation

Attention Occupational and Physical Therapists! Your help is needed to spread the word about COVID coverage and care options. Are you or someone you know (family, client) suffering from COVID or Long Haul COVID-19? Get the help you need quickly. Long Haul-Covid is covered by worker’s compensation in Washington State for healthcare and frontline workers. If anyone in these two worker categories has been actively working and contracted COVID-19, they are presumed to have been exposed at work. A person can apply for worker’s compensation to cover lost wages and treatment costs instead of using sick/vacation time. To apply, you need to [open a workers’ compensation claim](https://lni.wa.gov/claims/for-workers/file-a-claim/), which is easy to do.

Most emergency departments, urgent care clinics, and family physicians have the application forms to start this process for you, but it is a good idea to call ahead to make sure those resources are available. If your provider is unfamiliar with the process, a occupational health physician or specialist will be able to help you. Any provider can start a claim, but ongoing care and management will require that your physician or provider (MD, DO, ND, ARNP, PA-C, Chiropractor) be part of the [LNI provider network](https://secure.lni.wa.gov/provdir/) after the first visit.

Many people fear retribution from employers, but this worker’s compensation coverage for Covid-19 or Long Haul Covid-19n will not impact an employer’s worker’s compensation rate. This is good information to share with an employer.

**Who are considered healthcare and/or frontline workers?**

Here is a partial list to reference from LNI:

* All healthcare providers
* First responders
* Workers performing food processing, manufacturing, distribution, or meat packing
* Farmworkers
* Maintenance, janitorial, and food service workers at any facility treating patients
* Public transit drivers and operators
* Employees of licensed childcare facilities
* Employees of retail stores, which remain open to the public during the emergency
* Employees of hotels, motels, or other transient accommodation
* Restaurant employees who have contact with the public or co-workers
* Certified home care aides who work primarily in the home of individuals receiving care
* Corrections officers and support employees working at a correctional institution
* Certain school district and higher education employees
* Public library employees

**Who might suffer from lingering COVID-19 (Long Haul) and what are the common signs and symptoms?**

[According to the Mayo Clinic website](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/coronavirus-long-term-effects/art-20490351):

*Older people and people with many serious medical conditions are the most likely to experience lingering COVID-19 symptoms, but even young, otherwise healthy people can feel unwell for weeks to months after infection. Common signs and symptoms that linger over time include:*

* Fatigue
* Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
* Cough
* Joint pain
* Chest pain
* Memory, concentration, or sleep problems
* Muscle pain or headache
* Fast or pounding heartbeat
* Loss of smell or taste
* Depression or anxiety
* Fever
* Dizziness when you stand
* Worsened symptoms after physical or mental activities

**How can you help?**

As frontline workers, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy professionals are ideally positioned to identify those suffering from longer term symptoms, connect them with the available resources, and participate in care. We can make a huge difference in sharing coverage news and treatment resources with our clients, coworkers, families, and community members. By expanding access to coverage and participating in care, we help our communities accelerate the recovery from this pandemic. Thanks for all you do! Therapists are truly essential workers.

**Resource Links:**

File a worker’s compensation claim: <https://lni.wa.gov/claims/for-workers/file-a-claim/>

LNI provider Lookup: <https://secure.lni.wa.gov/provdir/>

For a comprehensive list of Frontline Workers see this legislation: [Senate bill 5115](https://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2021-22/Pdf/Bills/Senate%20Passed%20Legislature/5115-S.PL.pdf)

Mayo Clinic COVID-19: Long-term effects: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/coronavirus-long-term-effects/art-20490351>

**Occupational Therapy Resources**: <https://www.aota.org/practice/clinical-topics/covid-19>

**Physical Therapy Resources**: <https://www.apta.org/patient-care/public-health-population-care/coronavirus/management-of-patients>

New York Times Article: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/03/health/long-covid-treatment.html>

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