

Transforming Claims Management to Better Care for Employees

DIVISION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION AT THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR DRIVES SPEED AND EFFICIENCY MANAGING CLAIMS FOR ILL AND INJURED WORKERS

CARING FOR ILL AND INJURED EMPLOYEES

When United States federal employees are injured on the job, the Division of Federal Employees' Compensation (DFEC) helps ensure that they are provided with medical care and support for lost wages until they can return to work. With approximately 115,000 new claims every year, ranging from slips, trips, and falls to exposure to dangerous materials, DFEC employees process hundreds of thousands of forms annually.

INSPIRATION FOR TRANSFORMATION

When the DFEC was originally founded nearly a century ago, it relied exclusively on paper forms. This incurred heavy printing, mailing and scanning costs for the DFEC and injured workers. Most crucially, it impacted the speed with which claims could be processed. The speed of filing directly impacted the DFEC's goal of providing optimal care for injured employees.

"The sooner we get notification of the injury, the sooner we can get medical care for injured workers" - Julia Tritz, Chief of Technical Assistance at DFEC.

STEPS TO A SOLUTION

To improve speed of filing and operational efficiency, the DFEC made the decision to move away from paper forms to an electronic claims management system.

The DFEC's first step toward a more efficient system was an electronic data interchange (EDI) platform that could accept electronic claims submissions from federal agencies. In order to leverage this platform and submit employee claims, agencies had to develop their own submission platform.

"We found that larger agencies had the infrastructure and money to develop a submission platform, but many smaller agencies did not, preventing the adoption of a standard platform," says Paul Beckham, IT Branch Chief at the DFEC, Department of Labor. "We began looking at a more open system, accessible to all agencies."

ACHIEVING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF CLAIMS MANAGEMENT

Driven by the Deputy Director of the DFEC, Antonio Rios, the agency pushed for an open standard system that could simplify the creation, delivery, and administration of forms across all agencies. Using the Adobe Experience Manager platform (AEM, formerly known as LiveCycle), the DFEC worked with partners Twin Technologies and ASRC Federal/



PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Industry: Government
- Project: Digitizing claims management

RESULTS

- Increased timely filing rate from 80.1% to 86.2% for initial claims
- Increased timely filing rate from 57.8% to 75.9% for time loss claims
- Enabled anytime, anywhere claim file accessibility and self-service
- Produced significant savings through straight through processing
- Established secure file sharing method to protect data

TECH FOCUS



Adobe AEM/LiveCycle

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InuTeq to develop the Employees' Compensation Operations and Management Portal (ECOMP).

This accessible, web-based portal was built to enable employees to receive the fastest possible care through electronic document submissions. Agencies no longer needed to invest in their own electronic claims management systems to allow their employees to take part.

This accessible, web-based portal was built to enable employees across all participating agencies to receive the fastest possible care through electronic document submissions.

IMPROVED EMPLOYEE ACCESS AND VISIBILITY

ECOMP brought claims closer to the workers. Injured workers can log into ECOMP from any web browser for fast, convenient, and secure claims. Once logged into ECOMP, employees are guided through comprehensive claims eForms. Unlike paper docu-

ments, the ECOMP eForms highlight important information and alert employees to missing data. Context sensitive help, tools, and tips also enable workers to gain additional information about eForm fields.

After an employee uses ECOMP for eForm filing, they are provided an individualized dashboard from which they can view all of their eForms, and information about the filing status of each. This improves communication with injured employees and helps them avoid misfiled forms, duplicated submissions, and mailing delays.

CONSOLIDATED SUBMISSIONS & AUTOMATED APPROVALS

"We're seeing a marked increase in timeliness for agencies using ECOMP. Seeing these improvements gives us confidence that our platform is helping workers receive the timely medical care that they need." – Julia Tritz, Chief of Technical Assistance, DFEC, United States Department of Labor

Submitting supporting evidence along with claims forms is a significant factor to improving response speed. Before ECOMP, workers with access to the EDI could submit claims, but additional documentation from docu-

tors, nurses and lawyers would have to be submitted separately.

"Claims Examiners would see the claim form, but couldn't proceed until the additional evidence was received in the mail and scanned into the system, resulting in delays," says Tritz. "With ECOMP, examiners now receive claims and supporting documents together, which dramatically reduces the time needed to accept a claim."

When submitting claim forms for illness, injury, or wage loss, workers can also upload and attach supporting documents. Anyone with information related to an active case can submit files from any computer after being given a claim number and other key information for the claim file. Streamlined submissions also made it easier for injured workers to keep their files up-to-date, even years after the initial injury.

ECOMP also increased filing speed through streamlined approvals. "Some documents need to be signed by supervisors," says Beckham. "ECOMP streamlines the workflow by automatically routing documents to the appropriate parties."

Twin Technologies provides award winning consulting and delivery to Fortune 500 clients across government, financial services & insurance, healthcare, media, and more to help them achieve digital transformation and grow market share.

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ENSURING SECURITY AND USABILITY

One of the biggest benefits of the new ECOMP system is the use of digital rights management (DRM) to enable secure document access without sacrificing usability. Many documents in claim files contain sensitive information, including medical reports and psychiatric reviews. Previously, claim files could only be accessed from secure, offline computers located at the DFEC district offices. If the manager of an agency's workers compensation program needed to check an employee's file for any reason, they had to make an appointment and then travel to the appropriate district office.

Digital rights management (DRM) enables security & usability for ECOMP

Using the DRM functionality of the AEM/Lifecycle platform, the DFEC is able to control access to files, and prohibit unauthorized access, printing, or copying. The application of DRM functionality now allows federal employers to view secure PDF files from their work stations, balancing security and usability. "ECOMP helps address the security and

accessibility problems that have troubled agencies for years," says Tritz. "It gives us a cost-effective way to share sensitive information."

SAVING TIME AND MONEY, WHILE ACCELERATING WORKER CARE

Online document submissions eliminate printing and postage costs for the claimant. At the same time, fewer physical documents result in significant savings for the DFEC due to reduced processing costs. As more and more agencies adopted ECOMP, the time and cost savings became increasingly apparent.

Most importantly, the DFEC is seeing faster turnaround time with ECOMP to support timely worker care. The DFEC defined timely filing for initial claims for an injury as 10 business days, and timely filing for wage loss claims to be 5 days. The first agency to use ECOMP for all major workers compensation forms demonstrates the incredible gains in speed. In 2009, this agency had a timely filing rate for wage loss of 73.5%, but in the fourth quarter of 2012, the agency achieved a 99.2% timely filing rate. In the same time period, timely filing for initial injuries and illnesses jumped

from 90.1% to 100%.

In 2009, before deploying ECOMP, the government-wide rate of timely filing for initial claims was 80.1%, but by the end of 2012, the rate jumped to 86.2%, excluding the U.S. Postal Service. Wage loss claims showed an improvement from a timely filing rate of 57.8% in 2009 to 75.9% in 2012.

With the ECOMP system built with AEM/Lifecycle, and support from partners Twin Technologies and ASRC Federal/ InuTeq, the DFEC has streamlined claims processing while lowering costs, increasing convenience, and ensuring document security. "With ECOMP accelerating our workflows, we can receive and process claims faster than ever," explains Beckham. "It helps us meet our commitment to workers by getting them the help that they need to get back on their feet and back to work as quickly as possible."

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