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# WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND SAFETY CONFERENCE

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**OCTOBER 9, 2024** | 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Doubletree Hilton Lisle | 3003 Corporate W. Drive | Lisle, IL 60532



## **Adam Cox**

**Partner, Nyhan, Bambrick, Kinzie, & Lowry, P.C.**

Adam J. Cox, Esq. is the Executive Director of the Illinois Self-Insurers' Association and a practicing trial attorney, defending Illinois businesses in workers' compensation matters for the past two decades. He is a partner with the firm, Nyhan Bambrick, Kinzie & Lowry, serving on its Diversity Committee since its inception in 2020. Mr. Cox completed his undergraduate at the University of Iowa and graduated from DePaul University College of Law. He is a frequent lecturer for business-oriented groups, with particular interest in the areas of fraud and benefit entitlement.



## **Lou Sandoval**

**President and CEO, Illinois Chamber of Commerce**

Lou Sandoval is a highly accomplished executive leader with a proven track record in commercialization and developing effective go-to-market strategies. He has collaborated with Fortune 100 companies to drive technology-powered transformations in consumer engagement across various industries, including healthcare, business services, durable consumer products, and industrial products. Most recently he served as the President, Founder, and Managing Partner of Halo Advisory Group, a boutique Management Consulting firm focused on early/growth-staged companies and Fortune 500 clients. Lou has applied his over 30 years of extensive global experience in operational leadership, business development, mergers and acquisitions, technology, talent development, and ESG growth initiatives to drive business growth. Due to his unique perspective across various market verticals, he is widely sought-after as an advisor by many companies. Currently, Lou serves as the chair of the risk management committee and holds positions on the nominating, compensation, and governance committees of the Wintrust Bank Board of Directors, a post he has held since 2015. Lou resides on the South Side of Chicago with his spouse and two daughters. He competes in Offshore sailing, with over 30,000 nautical miles navigated and nine victories in the renowned Chicago Yacht Club Race to Mackinac. In 2021, he was honored with induction into the Lake Michigan Sailing Hall of Fame



## **Assistant Majority Leader Marcus C. Evans**

Marcus C. Evans, Jr., serves as the State Representative of the 33rd District of Illinois, which includes the South Side of Chicago and South Suburban Cook County. At the state capitol within the House of Representatives, Marcus is known to be a strong, collaborative, and consensus building leader. Under the leadership of Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch, he currently serves as both Assistant Majority Leader and Chairman of the Labor & Commerce Committee.

Over his years of service, Marcus has passed many impactful legislative measures in a variety of categories including: Energy Reliability, Labor Rights and Policy, Transportation, Health Care Funding & Availability, and Housing Stabilization & Development. As the Chairman of the Labor Committee, Marcus works with his colleagues and various interest groups on all legislative actions that impact working-class citizens and our economy. In addition, he serves as a member of the Revenue & Finance Committee and the Appropriations Human Services Committee. Marcus strongly believes in the proper stewardship of taxpayer dollars, thus he also serves on the bi-cameral Legislative Audit Commission (LAC).

Beyond the state capitol, Marcus enjoys connecting with policymakers across the country and around the world. Earlier this summer, he became President-Elect of the National Council of State Legislators (NCSL) and will eventually become NCSL President in August 2025. Marcus is also a member of The National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) and The Council of State Governments (CSG).

Before being appointed and subsequently elected to the Illinois House of Representatives, Marcus worked for the Chicago City Council as Assistant to the Alderperson of the 8th Ward. Marcus is a lifelong resident of the South Side of Chicago, a Chicago Public Schools graduate (Morgan Park High School, c/o '03), and understands the challenges that many of our urban youth face. In July of 2006, Marcus faced the challenge of his life when he was diagnosed with cancer, followed by immediate major surgery and chemotherapy. He uses his life experiences to fuel his strong passion to help improve the lives of others. Marcus currently serves on the University of Illinois Cancer Center Community Advisory Board, Illinois Cancer Health Equity Research Center (I-CHER) Community Advisory Board as well as University of Chicago’s Office of Community Engagement and Cancer Health Equity’s Policy Work Group.

Marcus received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Chicago State University. He is the proud father of one son Marcus, III. Outside of public service, Marcus works as a licensed real estate appraiser and an Illinois High School Association licensed basketball official.



## **State Senator Seth Lewis**

Seth Lewis proudly serves the State of Illinois as the Senator for the 24th District, a role he has held since January 2023 following two years of service in the Illinois House of Representatives. Prior to his service in the General Assembly, Senator Lewis was a trustee for the Bartlett Fire Protection District. While in the House of Representatives, Seth is credited with passing Cal’s Law, which ensures children diagnosed with cancer have greater access to critical diagnostic testing. He also created the State’s first Indian American Advisory Council, which celebrates and brings a legislative voice to Illinois’ Indian American community.

Senator Lewis grew up in a family where strong morals, integrity, volunteerism, and public service were instilled as core values, and he brings that foundation to his role as a state legislator.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in Manufacturing Engineering at the University of Iowa and previously served as Vice President of Operations for a small manufacturing business in Melrose Park. In addition to his current work in the Senate, he is an independent business owner and agent with State Farm Insurance. Senator Lewis and his wife, Bhavna, live in Bartlett, and together they have two adult sons. Outside of work, Seth enjoys playing golf, hunting, fishing, and spending time with his family.

Illinois’ 24th District is located in the west Chicago suburbs and includes all or portions of Addison, Bartlett, Bloomingdale, Carol Stream, Elk Grove Village, Hanover Park, Itasca, Roselle, Naperville, Warrenville, West Chicago, Wheaton, Winfield, and Wood Dale in DuPage and suburban Cook Counties.



## **State Representative Dan Ugaste**

Representative Dan Ugaste was first elected to the Illinois House in 2018. He represents the 65th District, which includes the far western suburbs of Chicagoland, including the areas in and around Campton Hills, Elburn, Elgin, Geneva, Lily Lake, South Elgin, St. Charles and Wayne.

Ugaste is a former shareholder and attorney at the firm of Nyhan, Bambrick, Kinzie and Lowry, specializing in workers' compensation defense and other relation litigation. He represented both insured and self-insured businesses of all sizes and across most industries, including manufacturing, construction, healthcare, shipping/logistics, retail and professional institutions.

Rep. Ugaste has served as the Past President of the Lake Forest College Alumni Board, as well as Past President and Chair of various bar associations and committees. He works every day to protect businesses from over-zealous advocates in the court system and against a system of regulations and red tape that hamper efforts to create their product, deliver a valuable service and provide good paying jobs for workers and their families. He is a committed fiscal conservative.

Rep. Ugaste continues to focus on pro-growth legislation and policies, helping to bring economic development and better career opportunities for the residents of Illinois. He is also committed to and advocates for transparency and accountability in the Illinois House, where he serves on several committees as well.

Ugaste has served his community as a coach and volunteer, even serving as a former volunteer firefighter. He regularly attends Geneva United Methodist Church. Ugaste graduated from Lake Forest High School and Lake Forest College, earning a Juris Doctorate degree from DePaul University. He and his wife, Denise, have three adult daughters and six grandchildren.



## **John Brown**

### ***Chief Executive Officer/Owner, Convergent***

John Brown, founder of Convergent CMS, a national multi-line third party casualty claim administration company, is a 39-year claims veteran, initially worked for a national TPA, then for large insurance companies. He transitioned to insurance brokerage, specializing in national accounts in loss sensitive programs, established a TPA within the firm and eventually rebranded it as Convergent CMS, focusing on clients in Captive, Self-Insured, and High-Deductible programs.



## **Mike Burnett**

### ***Risk Consultant, Marsh McLennan Agency***

Mike Burnett is a Risk Consultant in MMA's manufacturing practice. He has spent over 20 years designing and placing business insurance programs for middle-market manufacturers across the U.S. Mike is an industry expert and takes a partnership approach with his clients, working together to evaluate their risk exposures and build insurance programs that keep their assets protected.



## **Mark Walls**

### ***Vice President Client Engagement, Safety National***

Mark Walls is currently Vice President Client Engagement for Safety National, a multi-line specialty insurance and reinsurance carrier that offers a variety of risk solutions for large commercial and public entity clients. In this role, he is responsible for oversight of Client Engagement, Corporate Communications, and Government Affairs. Previously, he spent over 20 years on the claims side which gives him insights into the daily challenges faced by adjusters and employers. Mark is the founder of the 30,000+ member Work Comp Analysis Group on LinkedIn and he is also co-host of the popular Out Front Ideas with Kimberly and Mark educational series. He is a widely recognized industry expert and has been a frequent speaker at RIMS, PARMA, PRIMA, WCI and other industry conferences.





## **Paige Bowling**

### ***VP of Client Services, Corporate Pharmacy Services***

Paige Bowling has been with Corporate Pharmacy Services (CPS) since its inception in 1991. Over the past 33 years, Paige has used her expertise to refine CPS' approach to customer care and cost - savings solutions. She has been instrumental in developing programs that positively impact the daily operation of the clients she serves. Her contributions to the development of Blue Diamond, CPS's on-line portal, and their proprietary tiered workers' compensation formulary are the most notable. Paige has also shared her extensive knowledge with audiences across the country, speaking about current pharmacy trends and serving on several workers' compensation boards and

committees.



## **Timothy O'Gorman**

### ***Attorney, Keefe Campbell Biery & Associates***

John Campbell received his JD from the John Marshall Law School in 2012 joining the firm as law clerk to founding partner, Eugene Keefe prior to becoming attorney, receiving that combination of formal legal education and litigation experience. He has strong trial experience at all levels of the Workers' Compensation Commission and Appellate Courts throughout Illinois in workers' compensation defense, and general civil litigation and liability defense matters.



## **Ben Friederich**

### ***Vice President of Corporations and Co-owner, Abacus Research, Inc.***

Ben Friederich joined Abacus Research, Inc. in 2008, partnering with Paul A. Seguin. Ben received a B.A. from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, with a major in Administration of Justice, secondary concentrations in Criminal Investigations and Aerospace Studies and a minor in Political Science. It was Ben and Paul's vision to grow Abacus Research, Inc. into not only a nationwide investigations contractor, but a premier investigations provider of superior quality to the insurance and corporate industries. Today, they provide services to some of the largest manufacturing, transportation and food/retail employers in the United States and a wide range of third-party

administrators, workers' compensation, and auto-liability insurance providers.



## **Amy E. Bilton**

### ***Vice President, Nyhan, Bambrick, Kinzie, & Lowry, P.C.***

Amy E. Bilton practices workers' compensation defense and Medicare Secondary Payer compliance at the Chicago law firm of Nyhan, Bambrick, Kinzie & Lowry who has been inducted into the College of Workers' Compensation Lawyers and has been named a Notable Woman in Law by Crain's Chicago Business, a Super Lawyer, and a Leading Lawyer for Workers' Compensation defense. She also serves on Illinois' Workers' Compensation Medical Fee Schedule Advisory Board. Ms. Bilton is a frequent lecturer on workers' compensation and all aspects of Medicare Secondary Payer compliance. She is the past president of the National Medicare Secondary Payer Network (formerly NAMSAP), for which she co-chairs the Annual Conference planning committee; chairperson of the MSCC board for the ICHCC; instructor for the CMSP and CMSP-Fellow certifications; and contributing editor to Lexis' The Complete Guide to Medicare Secondary Payer Compliance publication. Ms. Bilton particularly enjoys handling catastrophic workers' compensation claims and those involving novel and unique legal and medical issues.



## **Michael J. Brennan**

### ***Chairman, Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission***

Michael J. Brennan was appointed as Chairman of the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission by Governor JB Pritzker in 2019. On March 13, 2023, he was reappointed as Chairman, by Governor Pritzker. He previously served as a Public Member Commissioner from 2013 to 2018.

As Chairman he has executed procedural changes leading to the creation and implementation of a paperless filing system for the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission, as well as a virtual process for the appearance of parties at monthly status calls and pre-trial hearings.

Mr. Brennan earned both his Bachelor of Arts and Juris Doctorate Degrees at De Paul University.

He has practiced law in Illinois and has litigated numerous cases reported by the Illinois Appellate Court, the Illinois Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court. From 1991 through 2013, Mr. Brennan was engaged in a private law practice, with an emphasis on Workers' Compensation. Previously, he served as an Illinois Assistant Attorney General, from 1977 through 1991, where he prosecuted Civil Revenue and Criminal Medicaid Fraud cases, before becoming the Chief of the then Industrial Commission Division.

He was among the principal authors of Larson's Illinois Workers' Compensation Handbook and published numerous articles dealing with Illinois Workers' Compensation issues for Quinlan's, Thomson West and Reuters. He has been qualified and testified as an expert on Workers' Compensation matters and has lectured extensively on the topic.

He has been elected by his peers as a Martindale-Hubbell Rated AV Preeminent Attorney for over Twenty Years, an Illinois Super Lawyer, an Illinois Leading Lawyer, named as among the Best Lawyers of America and among the Top Attorneys in Illinois by Chicago Magazine. In March of 2024, he was inducted as a Fellow of the College of Workers' Compensation Lawyers. He is a member of the Chicago Bar Association and Workers' Compensation Lawyers' Association.



## **Lisa Azoory-Keller**

### ***Partner, Nyhan, Bambrick, Kinzie, & Lowry, P.C.***

Lisa Azoory-Keller, Esq. is the Executive Secretary of the Illinois Self-Insurers' Association and a Partner at Nyhan, Bambrick, Kinzie & Lowry. She has been practicing workers' compensation law for approximately 12 years with emphasis on trial and appellate work. Lisa defends employers across Illinois and has written extensively on a variety of topics relating to Illinois Workers' Compensation law. Lisa has also lectured for the Illinois Self-Insurers' Association and the Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education on the topics of compensability of work injuries and trial practices.



## **Dr. Kern Singh**

### ***Vice Chair Department of Orthopedic Surgery, Rush University Medical Center***

Dr. Kern Singh is a trusted thought leader in Minimally Invasive and Endoscopic Outpatient Spine Surgery. Dr. Singh has dedicated his career to pioneering minimally invasive and endoscopic outpatient spine surgery. He is the Vice Chair of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery. In addition, he is the Professor and Director of the Division of Spine Surgery at RUSH University Medical Center and a Co-Director of the Minimally Invasive Spine Institute. Patients from all over the U.S. and the world choose Dr. Singh for his cutting-edge use of minimally invasive and endoscopic outpatient

surgical approaches.

Dr. Singh is also an award-winning researcher, having published over 500+ articles and book chapters, over 15 textbooks, and has given over 500+ lectures in the field of spinal surgery. Dr. Singh's groundbreaking research work has most recently won awards at the North American Spine Society (NASS) and Society of Minimally Invasive Spinal Surgery (SMISS) annual meetings.



## **William A. "Bill" Lowry**

***President and Shareholder, Nyhan, Bambrick, Kinzie, & Lowry, P.C.***

Bill Lowry has practiced law for over 37 years, specializing in Workers' Compensation Defense and Appellate work. Bill is a frequent lecturer, a noted author, and has been a Fellow of the College of Workers' Compensation Lawyers since 2020. Bill has also been honored by Best Lawyers 2008-present, by Super Lawyers 2010-present, by Leading Lawyers 2010-present and by Top Attorneys in Illinois 2023-present. In 2018, Bill served as Defense Counsel to the Business Caucus during the Legislative Agreed Bill Process in Springfield, Illinois. Bill is also an Elected Official, having served as Cook County Commissioner of the 3rd District since 2018.



## **Al Gapinski**

***CEO, NHRMA Mutual Insurance Company***

As the Chief Executive Officer of NHRMA Mutual Insurance Company, Al leads a specialized workers' compensation insurance company that caters to the unique needs of long-term care and human services providers, primarily located in Illinois. Focusing on this niche market allows NHRMA Mutual to develop tailored insurance solutions that address the specific risks and challenges faced by organizations in these fields.

In addition to his role at NHRMA, Al also serves as the CEO of Winning Wheels, Inc., a unique and specialized long-term care facility. Winning Wheels is dedicated to providing high-quality care for younger individuals with severe disabilities who rely on wheelchairs for mobility.

Al's dual roles as both the insured and the insurer provide him with a unique perspective. This duality allows him to see the workers' compensation landscape from both sides of the equation, giving him an understanding of the programs, challenges, and opportunities that exist in these specialized sectors.



## **Marci Rodriguez**

***Risk Management Supervisor, UPS***

Marci Rodriguez is responsible for managing the Workers' Compensation, Auto Liability, and General Liability programs for UPS. Her primary objective is to mitigate the high-risk exposures in Illinois through effective case management and timely resolution. Marci holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Thomas Edison State University & has 27 years of industry leading experience at UPS.



## **Frank M. Totton**

***U.S. Workers' Compensation Manager – Total Rewards Americas North Human Resources, Caterpillar***

Frank Totton started his insurance career in 1987 working in the insurance industry as an intern before graduating from Bradley University. After graduation, he continued to work in the insurance industry for 23 years as an Adjuster, Claim Supervisor and Claims Manager before working for Caterpillar.

Frank joined Caterpillar in July 2010 as the U.S. Workers' Compensation Manager. He oversees the Caterpillar self-insured/self-administered program in Illinois and California as well as various workers' compensation programs in other states, which includes both insured, and self-insured plans.

While most of his experience has been focused on Illinois, Frank has handled both workers' compensation and general liability claims across the country. Other related experience includes being a board member of the WCRI (IL Chapter), The Illinois Self Insured Assoc. Advisory Board, the Liberty Mutual Advisory Board, a guest speaker for the School of Risk Management at Bradley University, the Peoria R.I.M.S. Chapter and a member of the Greater Peoria Area Claims Association.



## **Dr. Preston Wolin**

### ***Director and Founder, Center for Athletic Medicine***

Dr. Preston Wolin earned his M.D. degree from the University of Illinois and completed his residency at Northwestern University Medical Center. He completed two fellowships: Sports Medicine at Boston Children's Hospital/Harvard University and Arthroscopic and Reconstructive Knee Surgery at Newton-Wesley Hospital/Tufts University.

Board Certified by the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons with specialization in the shoulder, knee, ankle, and elbow, Dr. Wolin is also subspecialty certified in Sports Medicine and serves as an Assistant Professor of Orthopedic Surgery at the University of Illinois at Chicago and

Director of the Sports medicine Fellowship.

He is the current team physician for Lincoln Park High School and Leo High School. Dr. Wolin has also served as team doctor for DePaul University, Loyola University, the University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago State University, Roosevelt University, the Chicago Fire (Major League Soccer), United States Soccer National Men's and Women's Teams, Windy City Thunderbolts, and the Schaumburg Boomers.

A founding member of the Illinois State High School Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, Dr. Wolin continues to advise the IHSA on sports medicine issues including COVID. He is the author of the safe pitch count for IHSA baseball. Dr. Wolin is a Catholic League and Illinois Athletic Trainers Hall of Fame inductee. He has also been Vice President of the Conference USA Medical Committee and a consultant to the National Strength and Conditioning Association.

With considerable expertise in workers' compensation, Dr. Wolin is consulted by workers' and employers' attorneys. Dr. Wolin is the only orthopedic surgeon on the Medical Fee Advisory Committee of the Illinois Workers Compensation Commission. He has spoken before many workers' compensation groups, including insurance adjusters, nurse case managers, and attorneys. He has served as Chairman of the Illinois State Medical Society's Workers Compensation Task Force and has testified before both the Illinois State House and Senate. Currently, he is a Board Member of the Illinois Association of Orthopedic Surgeons.