

April 5, 2012 UPDATE: OWCP and USPS have collaborated to clarify the voluntary process for injured USPS employees to use Align networks to provide physical therapy that has been authorized by OWCP. As part of this OWCP-USPS collaboration, USPS has advised OWCP that Align providers have been provided written clarification concerning the process. USPS further advised that the Mandatory Stand Up Talks given to USPS employees were revised and distributed. These clarifications explain that USPS employees may use Align Networks for OWCP-authorized physical therapy treatment, or may continue to have their medical providers work directly with OWCP/ACS to secure the appropriate authorization for another physical therapy provider.

No Change in OWCP Procedures for Physical Therapy Authorizations

Recent communications from the United States Postal Service and Align Networks have caused confusion regarding the process for securing authorization for physical therapy for treatment of approved conditions under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA). Under 5 U.S.C. 8103 and its implementing regulations and procedures, only the Department of Labor's Office of Workers' Compensation Programs has the authority to determine what medical care will be authorized. Authorization requests should continue to be sent to ACS as OWCP's designated bill processing agent; authorizations and bills are processed by ACS in accordance with OWCP's established guidelines. In addition:

- **Medical Providers are not required to refer USPS claimants only to the Align Network for authorization for physical therapy; any communication that suggests or implies otherwise is simply incorrect.**
- **Align Networks does not have the power to authorize physical therapy treatment under FECA.**

Consistent with past practice, **all** requests for authorization of physical therapy **must** be submitted to OWCP's medical billing contractor, ACS, using the template approved by OWCP. If the request is not submitted electronically through the ACS web portal at <http://owcp.dol.acsinc.com>, any request for authorization of physical therapy must be faxed to **800-215-4901**. Faxing a request for physical therapy to any other number will delay OWCP/ACS's processing and authorization of physical therapy. In addition:

- **No federal employee (including any USPS employee/claimant) is required to use Align Network, or a physical therapist that is affiliated with Align Network, for scheduling or treatment of a condition approved by OWCP under FECA.**
- **Regardless of what provider is used, there are never co-pays or out-of-pocket expenses under FECA for physical therapy treatment for an approved condition.**

While OWCP has no objection to any claimant using Align Network for physical therapy, such use cannot reduce an injured employee's out of pocket expenses as there are none.