The Cases That Stay With You

They may inspire, disturb, or take unexpected turns. Sometimes it’s a return-to-work story, or maybe it’s a complex case that taught you to pay close attention. But for whatever reason, these claims linger, long after they’re closed. We asked A.I.M. Mutual supervisors to share a few of their past cases that resonated.

Claim Handling with Compassion
By Andrew Burton, Claim Supervisor

THIS CLAIM involved a landscaper who had spent over 20 years working in a family business. The employee was removing trees when a branch fell onto his head and neck. The accident resulted in a spinal cord injury. While undergoing diagnostic imaging for his work injury, the doctors discovered a cancerous mass in his brain. Despite making gains in therapy from the accident, the doctors determined he had only had two-to-three months to live due to the tumor. Six months post injury, the employee passed away.

Adjusters are trained to use all the tools available to control the direction of a claim. This claim was a harsh reminder that there are times when our ability to control a positive outcome is limited. In these moments, I’ve learned that you have to turn your attention to the “little things” you can control.

We made prompt contact with the family, demonstrated compassion, and ensured there was no uncertainty as to the deliverable benefits. A patient advocate was assigned to coordinate care and serve as a liaison between the practitioners and the family.

While this claim took a tragic turn, I am confident that we provided comfort to the employee’s family during their time of grief. At the end of the day, it is the little things that we do on a claim that make a difference.

The Strength of a Team
By Forrest MacDonald, Senior Claim Supervisor

THE CASE that has made a lasting impact on me involved a construction worker who suffered a traumatic brain injury. The employee was working in the basement of a home when he lost control of a pneumatic nail gun and accidentally discharged a half-inch nail into his left temple. He was found unresponsive by coworkers. He was med-flighted to a local trauma center and underwent emergency surgery. He endured speech, occupational, and physical therapies to improve his functional capabilities and focused on strategies to facilitate skills required for a return to work. Within six months of his traumatic injury, the employee was able to progress to a work conditioning program, pass his driving assessment, and return to work on modified duty.

The claim team coordinated the day-to-day activity and made sure that nothing fell through the cracks. Our Regional Claim Specialist met with the injured worker and his wife to discuss his benefits. Our on-site nurse case manager coordinated all of the extensive medical treatment. There was terrific communication. Our efforts complemented one another as we were all committed to the same goal of helping this gentleman get the best medical treatment to get his life back and return to work. It is a great example of what can be accomplished when everyone works together as a team.

Part 2 will be featured in the fall edition of The Connection.