

Chris Sharp: [00:02](#) Welcome to the A.I.M. Mutual podcast. I'm Chris Sharp. I'm excited to sit down today with President and CEO of A.I.M. Mutual, Mike Standing. Today we're going to take a closer look at what sets this regional workers' compensation insurer apart from the competition. For a little background January 1st, 2019 marked the 30 years of operation of the A.I.M. Mutual Insurance companies based here in Burlington, Massachusetts. Now licensed in five states the company insures almost 20,000 employers and A.M. Best, the credit rating agency serving the insurance industry, has affirmed A.I.M. Mutual's financial strength rating of A for excellent with a stable outlook. But brokers have a lot of choice for workers' compensation coverage with over 200 writers of workers comp in Massachusetts alone. So let's dig into what has led to the lasting growth of this company and fueled its successful partnership with brokers and policyholders alike. Thanks for being here, Mike. So let's jump right in with our first question.

Chris Sharp: [01:02](#) 30 years is a significant milestone in a business like yours. So what sets A.I.M. Mutual apart?

Mike Standing: [01:08](#) Thank you, Chris. Frankly, what sets us apart is the people that work here. We have a wonderful team of people who are very dedicated and committed to a mission, which is to provide workers' compensation insurance to New England employers and provide the best level of service and customer awareness that we can possibly deliver. And being a monoline regional carrier, we have to set ourselves apart by what we offer. And we offer an industry-leading team of people and an industry-leading platform of services to our insureds.

Chris Sharp: [01:40](#) Nice. And I mean I know that A.I.M. Mutual has been nationally recognized in a couple of areas, namely injury prevention and wellness and in chronic pain management. So what is it that drives these innovative ideas?

Mike Standing: [01:53](#) We primarily transact business in Massachusetts.

Mike Standing: [01:57](#) Over 80% of our businesses derive from the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is an administered rate state, which not to bore you with too many details of that, but we get told how much we can charge for our product by the state regulators. So we take the view that we need to control what goes out and by limiting losses and making sure that our insured employees are safer at work and are able to perform their jobs in a safe and healthy environment is leading us to better claims management and reduction in cost on the claims side. So in all, from the injury prevention work that we do to the wellness work that we

do, we're hoping that we're putting our insured employees on a better footing for when they do go to work if they do get injured, they're not as significant. Hopefully avoiding some of those injuries. But if they do, they're not as significant as they could have been if we hadn't done the upfront work.

- Chris Sharp: [02:53](#) Right. And I know that you recently started writing business in Maine and Vermont as well. So I mean, how does that expansion help your existing policyholders?
- Mike Standing: [03:02](#) Well, as I said, we started in 1989 in response to a crisis here in Massachusetts in worker's comp insurance. So we've focused our business primarily over those 30 years here in Massachusetts. Starting in 2001, we were licensed in New Hampshire as an adjunct to the business we were doing in Massachusetts because we needed to be able to support businesses that did business in Massachusetts but might once in a while, go to New Hampshire
- Chris Sharp [03:34](#) Right.
- Mike Standing [03:34](#) We've since grown to be the number four carrier in NH.
- Mike Standing: [03:38](#) Maine and Vermont are very much similar in that insureds from western Massachusetts and Vermont and New Hampshire may travel over to Vermont to do business and from New Hampshire and Massachusetts may travel to Maine to do business. In Vermont, we've had a very successful roll out in Vermont and in Maine we just started January 1st of 2019 and we're finding our way slowly there. And we'll see where we wind up, but it's to be better able to serve our client base as they expand their operations, we're able to meet their needs.
- Chris Sharp: [04:14](#) Okay. What should prospective brokers know about A.I.M. Mutual as a carrier?
- Mike Standing: [04:22](#) We like to think that we do business with brokers as the people who represent their insureds, but that we try and act as a direct writer that we try and get to know the insured as well as we can and understand their operations. Our new advertising tagline for our 30th anniversary is First, we listen.
- Mike Standing: [04:41](#) And that means we don't just have a manual, where we look and say this piece of business is not acceptable. We'll listen to you, talk about it and see where we can take it from there. Generally we write things that others don't write. Because we

take the time to understand the risk and that's what we're going to do for our brokers going forward.

- Chris Sharp: [05:02](#) Okay. And that you'd mentioned that A.I.M. Mutual's a monoline insurance carrier. What does that mean? What are the advantages to that?
- Mike Standing: [05:11](#) Well, we specialize. We're not a generalist. We specialize in workers' compensation, all of our efforts are focused on worker's compensation. And so we spend a lot of time thinking about how we're going to improve that product, the delivery of that product to our customers and their customers, our customers being the brokers and their customers being the insureds.
- Mike Standing: [05:31](#) How we can better deliver that product and what we can do to enhance that product as we go forward.
- Chris Sharp: [05:37](#) Okay. And so what would you say to employers who might wonder about group self-insurance?
- Mike Standing: [05:43](#) Don't do it.
- Chris Sharp: [05:45](#) Fair enough.
- Mike Standing: [05:48](#) It can work. It doesn't always work and it can be very difficult to manage. I think part of the idea of buying insurance is to get the risk off to a third party. If you are self-insured, you're doing that, you're keeping the risk yourself.
- Chris Sharp: [06:05](#) Right.
- Mike Standing: [06:05](#) And this can be, as we've seen over our 30 years, a fairly catastrophic event. Once in a while in the workers' compensation line of business, we can have, you know, \$10 and \$15 million losses with young people getting injured at work. So why bear that risk yourself if you've got a carrier who is willing to do for you and who is A rated and financially sound like we are.
- Chris Sharp: [06:27](#) That makes sense to me.
- Mike Standing: [06:28](#) Thank you.
- Chris Sharp: [06:29](#) Well, you know what, thank you so much for your time and insight, Mike, and thank you to all of our listeners out there. We

hope you've enjoyed our talk and are able to tune in for our next topic soon.

Mike Standing:

[06:39](#)

Thank you Chris, and thanks to all those who have supported us over these last 30 years.