

Review and IME Blog

Subscriber Spotlight



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Tell us a little about yourself:

I have been practicing as a licensed psychologist in Kansas for almost 24 years. My degree is from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, CO. For the last 17 years I have been co-owner of a private practice. We have six associates in the practice, in addition to my partner and myself. Before that I worked for 7 years at a nonprofit faith based practice, also here in Wichita Kansas. I have a general practice providing psychotherapy and psychological evaluations, and I have recently added Neurofeedback to my skills.

How did you get involved in providing reviews, IME's ?

About eight years ago an attorney I had done some work with asked me to do my first Independent Medical Exam (IME). She was quite helpful in educating me about the AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment, and how to use them. Prior to that I had been doing disability evaluations for Social Security for a number of years. Some cutbacks in our state resulted in those referrals drying up, and I was looking for some work to replace those evals. In Kansas for an injured worker to claim psychological damages in a Work Comp Case, the psychological injuries have to be as a direct result of physical injuries. That complicates things some for us, and I have had to learn how to work within the

confines of those laws. I have started routinely seeking authorization for Neurofeedback from the Work Comp companies – since a lot of my referrals have to do with mild TBI. I do not take private health insurance for Neurofeedback, and I have noticed that I do have to carefully review payments from Work Comp companies because they have been known to try to pay at rates that are lower than the Schedule of Medical Fees. (Keep on top of your invoices and details of payments folks! It does matter!)

How do you market your services ?

I get IME and Work Comp therapy referrals from several Work Comp companies, a variety of attorneys, and the Administrative Law Judges for the Kansas Department of Labor. I have considered doing some military related disability evaluations, but to tell you the truth, the confines of their system (a large amount of files to review in a very short amount of time) has made me reluctant to proceed.

In general, my marketing consists of regularly getting the word out about our new website (recently improved to optimize appearance on mobile devices) www.riverparkpsych.com. I also usually write a short introduction letter to primary care physicians for my new patients, and I call attorney's offices after they refer patients – so that we can establish a good communication pipeline. About five years ago I accepted an invitation to present at the Kansas Work Comp conference, and they have had me back to give two more talks since then. That helps to get my name out there. For my Neurofeedback work I have made up rack cards that I routinely hand out and make available to referring physicians and current patients. Vistaprint is a great source for affordable supplies like rack cards, brochures, business cards, etc. Years ago I developed a professional relationship with a local TV news reporter, and I now occasionally have requests for on-camera interviews.

Has your subscription to Todd's blog helped you ? If so how?

My subscription to Todd's blog has been very helpful in giving me leads to possible new referral sources, and I have signed up with a couple of companies – still waiting to see if the referrals start rolling in from them. I do like reading about how other professionals structure their practices, and ethical pitfalls to avoid.

What advice would you give to someone just starting out in providing this service ?

If you are just starting out in the IME world, I would recommend getting copies of the AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment – editions 6, 4, and 2, and reviewing your specialty area in those texts. You will be expected to provide reports that provide information consistent with those formats. Contact local attorneys and let them know you are interested in working with them, and provide them with redacted work samples. Contact the Department of Labor in your state and check into getting on their referral list for IME's and treatment services. And, above all, when you start doing the work, make sure that you provide reports and progress notes in a timely fashion. It may sound like basic common sense, but it really does matter that your referral sources know that they can count on you to get the agreed upon reports and other paperwork when they need it.

For fun, tell us one thing people would be surprised to find out about you ?

Fun stuff: I have been doing Jazzercise for my fitness routine for the last 30 years. I find that it helps me to dump stress and to keep up my overall health. And it is just plain fun. I also love Zombie movies and TV shows. Mindless (literally) fun.

Dr. Allen was interview by subscriber and active file reviewer David Sybert, MD. Dr. Sybert is board certified and a subject matter expert in anesthesiology, pain medicine and perioperative medicine. If you would like to be interviewed for the subscriber spotlight please contact davidsybert@gmail.com