



AMA Guides® to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment

Frequently Asked Questions

The American Medical Association is committed to equitable treatment of every patient with the best available medicine. The *AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment* incorporate science, evidence-based medicine and assessment tools to provide a rigorous methodology to enable physicians to provide a fair and consistent evaluation of patients who have suffered an illness or injury resulting in a permanent impairment.

What's wrong with using outdated AMA Guides?

As new medical innovations become available, patient outcomes continue to improve, but not all areas of medicine evolve at the same pace. Consequently, equitable impairment evaluations require consistent use of the most current medicine.

Who uses the AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment?

The AMA Guides have been the accepted authority on permanent loss of function and are relied on by physicians for assessment of permanent impairment for more than half a century. They are used by over 40 states and countries.

How are medical advances addressed in the AMA Guides?

Equitable assessments require consistent use of current medicine. As new medical advances occur that could impact the impairment rating process, community stakeholders are engaged to propose revisions.

How are the AMA Guides updated?

A stakeholder-driven editorial panel comprised of leading physicians and allied health professionals will curate the content of the AMA Guides. This process was created to ensure update transparency and to deliver timely enhancements to the AMA Guides reflecting current evidence-based medical practice.

How does the AMA ensure the best medical guidance is adopted?

Because the editorial process draws on the AMA's unique collaborative capability to gain insights from the entire health care community, the editorial panel represents diverse expertise in medical care and impairment rating.

How will the editorial panel update and modernize the AMA Guides?

The editorial panel will provide a new transparent, stakeholder-driven process for maintaining the AMA Guides that allows rapid incorporation of new medical advances. The panel will focus editorial priorities on areas where additional guidance is most needed while publishing content on a consistent cadence in recognition of state regulatory considerations.



How did the AMA select the editorial panel members?

The panel was selected through a rigorous process and includes a broad solicitation of nominations from more than 200 organizations across the medical community reflecting the communities the AMA Guides serve. The AMA Guides Editorial Panel is comprised of experts from neurology, nursing, occupational medicine, ophthalmology, orthopedics, pain medicine, physical medicine and rehabilitation, physical therapy, preventive medicine and psychiatry.

What else is the AMA doing to Advance the AMA Guides?

The AMA Guides Editorial Panel is a key element of a broader initiative to modernize the AMA Guides. In 2020, the AMA intends to deliver the AMA Guides online to enable timely content updates and to allow easy access to materials. This digital solution will easily transition stakeholders to the most current medicine.

Why is the AMA in a leadership role?

As the single largest physician advocacy organization in the United States, the AMA's insights, experiences, research and expertise are unmatched making the AMA the most credible organization to convene the medical expertise needed to guide the medical aspects of impairment assessment.

What other organizations is the AMA engaged with?

AMA is working in tandem with a broad array of stakeholders, including the workers compensation community, to develop resources that reflect the most current medicine and address the challenges states and jurisdictions face in appropriately evaluating permanent impairment, a critical input to the determination of benefits in workers compensation and personal injury settlements.

Effective July 1, 2021, the AMA will consider AMA Guides Sixth 2021 to be the most current version of AMA Guides Sixth. Going forward, the AMA Guides will be maintained exclusively [online](#).

More information on the AMA Guides

Read more about the evolution of the [AMA Guides](#)

Stay informed about [AMA Guides Editorial Panel Meetings](#)

Learn more about [AMA Guides Digital](#)

Learn more about the 2021 update at [AMAEdHub™](#)

