OJI Notification Requirement

As most UAH employees are aware, the University provides benefits to workers who sustain an on the job injury ("OJI"). The benefits are based on a policy of the Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama, rather than on the Alabama workers’ compensation statute. The University, as a state agency, is not subject to this statute. The benefits are similar to those mandated under the workers’ compensation statute, however, and include payment of OJI related medical expenses, payment of lost wages, and payment of permanent disability and death benefits. The OJI program at this campus is administered by the Office of Counsel ("OOC") in accordance with the UAH Occupational Injury Policy.

The University’s policy requires that all available insurance benefits first be applied to the expenses of medical treatment, with the University then paying any deductibles or co-payments expenses. Formerly, an injured employee was generally required to first pay the deductible and/or co-pay amounts and then request reimbursement from the University, a process that could take several weeks. In 2010, an arrangement was negotiated with the University’s health insurance provider, BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama, under which all these amounts would be paid by BCBS, thus eliminating the need for the employee to incur even temporary out-of-pocket costs.

In order for this arrangement to be implemented in a particular case, the OOC Coordinator, Kerry Mitchell, must contact the medical provider before medical care is rendered to the employee and supply a special BCBS work-related injury ("WRI") code. If this is not done, the employee will be responsible for the deductible and/or co-pay, as before, and will have to apply for reimbursement. It is therefore most important that Ms. Mitchell be contacted by the employee or his/her supervisor as soon as possible after the injury. Not only can she then help the employee with an appointment with the medical provider, but she will be able to communicate the WRI code to the provider to initiate the more convenient BCBS payment arrangement.

For more detailed information regarding the UAH Occupational Injury Policy, see the following link: [www.uah.edu/legal/injuries](http://www.uah.edu/legal/injuries).