

July 29, 1946

In reply to Mr. R. R. Irwin's questionnaire from Augusta,
Kansas:

Question 1

At the points where you have Medical and Health Service set up under a retainer arrangement in which the physician only gives part of his time, what general or specific understanding do you have with the physician as to when he treats an employee at our expense and when he arranges for office or hospital service at the employees expense.

We can see where this part time arrangement can lead to complications if we should use a locally practicing physician for part time service at our plant. Complication might be kept down for a time by employing one from Wichita, but apparently this should be done only if a local doctor is not interested in rendering the service.

Answer

The physician at the Company's Medical Department treats all cases that come to him in this department without any cost to the employee, whether acute or chronic condition during his specified hours in the clinic. If the employee is too sick to come to the clinic for medical advice, and the Company doctor happens to be his physician, and he calls this physician to see him at his home or goes to the physician's office, the cost of these visits belongs to the employee. If the case is an industrial injury or disease, and it is such that can be treated in the clinic throughout the course of the injury or disease, there is no cost to the employer other than the regular operating expenses of the clinic. However, if the case is of such a nature that it is to be sent to the hospital or treated at home, this case is paid for by compensation insurance.

I cannot see where too much complication would arise among the local doctors as the treatments that we render to our employees are those which, as a general rule, an employee does not go to his own family physician for. Our doctor in the plant must be strictly ethical and not try to use his Company connections to try to rob the other doctors of their cases. For instance, if a patient becomes sick while working and goes to our Medical Department and is found sick enough to be sent home and will be in further need of medical attention, he must be told to go to a doctor of his own choice. If the patient's condition warrants it, the doctor whom he has selected to go to should be contacted and told of this patient's illness, and all assistance be given to this doctor that is possible from our Medical Department.

Question 2

Have you found it desirable at any point to limit the dispensing of medicines and drugs through Company service?

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In a town the size of Augusta the business men are always concerned about business taken away from their local drugstores.

Answer

Yes, we do limit the dispensing of medicine and drugs. Only the simplest medication is given out at our plants. The rest of the medication is given out by prescriptions to be filled by the outside pharmacists. It has been my experience, instead of diminishing the pharmacists' business, his prescription business is doubled if not quadrupled. Prescription to be paid for by employee unless otherwise specified.

Question 3

Have you made commitments to the employees that their relationship with the doctor continues confidential except in instances where disability would create a safety hazard at their work?

Your reports showed that you had a record of many types of disability, but I do not believe you indicated whether the management was familiar with each individual case. We doubt whether service of this kind would be very well received if the general confidential relationship between the doctor and patient was destroyed.

Answer

All medical is confidential. This is important part of our setup. Neither the doctor or the nurse or the stenographer connected with the Medical Department can reveal any of our findings. If it is done, they are very highly censored, and if it happens too many times, we feel the Medical Department is no place for such an employee.

The only time that confidential medical information is taken up with the employer is when it would be to the advantage of the employee, i.e., if an employee is sick, we take it up with management to see what the Company can do to help him. What Mr. Irwin might be referring to is a long list of diseases and conditions he saw in our reports, but if he finds any names after these diseases and conditions, I would like to see them.

Question 4

Does the company as a broad general policy wish to see this service inaugurated at all points of concentrated employment?

Answer

The Medical Department would like to see this. This is up to management what they want to do.

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