

## MICHELE R. PUNTURI

DIRECTOR, WORKERS' COMPENSATION DEPARTMENT  
SHAREHOLDER



### AREAS OF PRACTICE

Workers' Compensation

### CONTACT INFO

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2000 Market Street, Suite 2300  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

### ADMISSIONS

Pennsylvania  
1990

U.S. District Court Eastern District  
of Pennsylvania  
1991

U.S. Court of Appeals 3rd Circuit  
1991

### EDUCATION

Widener University School of Law  
(J.D., cum laude, 1990)

University of Pittsburgh (B.A., cum  
laude, 1987)

### OVERVIEW

As Director of the Workers' Compensation Department, Michele oversees more than 35 attorneys throughout 10 of the firm's offices. She is also a member of the firm's Board of Directors. Michele has been with the firm for more than 30 years, and has been a shareholder in the Worker's Compensation Department since 1998. Michele represents third party administrators, insurance carriers and self-insureds, handling matters for construction companies, steel product and technology companies, hospitals, retailers, supermarkets, hotels, personnel corporations, landscaping contractors, assisted living facilities, townships, and manufacturers. In addition to her managerial and litigation responsibilities, Michele supervises client development efforts for the Workers' Compensation Department.

During her career, Michele has successfully defeated numerous claim petitions by presenting medical and factual evidence showing that the claimants did not sustain work-related injuries and/or corresponding disabilities. Her innovative legal strategies have included requesting the judge's presence at the employer's premises. In addition, Michele has argued numerous cases in front of the Workers' Compensation Appeal Board and has taken multiple cases to the Commonwealth Court.

In March 2022, Michele was inducted into the College of Workers' Compensation Lawyers, joining a select group of attorneys from across the country who have distinguished themselves in the practice of workers' compensation law.

Michele has lectured for various organizations, including the Claims & Litigation Management Alliance and Philadelphia Bar Association. She has published many articles and educational/training materials and has authored a chapter on workers' compensation in the prestigious *West Pennsylvania Forms and Commentary Employment Law* treatise.

Michele graduated *cum laude* from the University of Pittsburgh and the Widener University School of Law. Michele's success is due in large part to the care and dedication she exhibits to each client and the attention to detail shown in her work. It is these characteristics that have led many of her clients to look to her as a sounding board for business and legal advice.

Michele is active in the community, donating her time to a host of charitable organizations including Northern Children's Services and the American Cancer Society.

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## HONORS & AWARDS

AV® Preeminent™ by Martindale-Hubbell®

The Best Lawyers in America®, Workers' Compensation Law - Employers  
2023-2025

Pennsylvania Self-Insured Association, Award of Excellence, 2008

Pennsylvania Super Lawyer  
2007-2008, 2021-2024

Pennsylvania Super Lawyer Corporate Counsel Edition, 2008-2009

Pennsylvania Super Lawyer Rising Star, 2005

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## ASSOCIATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS

Claims & Litigation Management Alliance (CLM), Workers' Compensation Community Leadership team

College of Workers' Compensation Lawyers

Defense Research Institute

Judge Alexander F. Barbieri  
Workers' Compensation Inn of Court

Pennsylvania Defense Institute

Philadelphia Bar Association, Women in the Profession Committee co-chair (2021, 2022);  
Judicial Commission (2022)

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## YEAR JOINED

1988

## THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

### 6 Key Workers' Compensation Safety and Data Analysis Considerations

Philadelphia - Headquarters  
Workers' Compensation  
September 12, 2024

### Marshall Dennehey Announces 2024 Pennsylvania Super Lawyers and Rising Stars

May 17, 2024  
Twenty-eight attorneys across Marshall Dennehey's six Pennsylvania offices have been selected to the 2024 edition of Pennsylvania Super Lawyers magazine.  
[Read More](#)

### Reflecting the Talent You Want to Recruit: Building and Achieving a Diverse Team and a Better Business

Philadelphia - Headquarters  
September 1, 2023

### Why Contest Mental Health Claims in Workers' Comp When You Can Prevent Them to Begin With?

Philadelphia - Headquarters  
Workers' Compensation  
March 28, 2023

### In Court: What's New on the Medical Marijuana Front for Workers' Compensation

Philadelphia - Headquarters  
Workers' Compensation  
August 8, 2022

## CLASSES/SEMINARS TAUGHT

*The Dream Team Approach to WC Case Management*, co-presenter, CLM Workers' Comp Week: A Virtual Series, August 1, 2024

*Getting Caught With Your Hand in the Proverbial Cookie Jar*, ClaimsXchange Annual Conference, Philadelphia, PA, October 12, 2023

*Building a Better Business, Achieving a More Diverse Future*, CLM Annual Conference, Tampa, FL, March 30, 2023

*The Dawning of the Age of Remote Work*, CLM Workers' Compensation and Retail, Restaurant and Hospitality Conference, Chicago, IL, May 19, 2022

*The Right Way to Avoid a Wrongful Termination Claim When the Employee Is Also a Workers' Compensation Claimant*, Marshall Dennehey webinar, March 3, 2022

*Workers' Compensation Winter Roundup*, Graham Company webinar, December 15, 2020

*Survivor: Workers' Compensation Edition*, CLM Workers Compensation and Retail, Restaurant & Hospitality Conference webinar, June 16, 2020

*Workman's Compensation & Third Party Liability*, National Association of Women in Construction Philadelphia Chapter, February 26, 2020

*Determining the Value of Your Case*, Marshall Dennehey Workers' Compensation Seminar, October 24, 2019

*Maximizing the Productivity of an Aging Workforce*, CLM Workers' Compensation Conference, Chicago, IL, May 22, 2019

*Driven to Distraction – Mitigating Distracted Driving Claims*, CLM Annual Conference, Orlando, FL, March 14, 2019

*Return to Work: Perfecting Job Offers and the Revival of the Labor Market Survey*, Marshall Dennehey Workers' Compensation Seminar, October 25, 2018

*Private Eyes: They're Watching You!*, Philadelphia Bar Association Workers' Compensation Section Meeting, September 14, 2018

*Workers' Compensation Settlement Evaluation Analysis and Mediations*, guest lecturer, Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law, April 11, 2018

*The Rise in Workplace Violence: Practical Tips and Guidance to Avoid Devastating Consequences and Reduce Liability*, CLM Annual Conference, March 15, 2018

*Don't Get Burned: How to Keep a Medical Only Claim From Becoming an Indemnity Claim*, Marshall Dennehey Workers' Compensation Seminar, October 19, 2017

*Today's "Medical Only" Claim is Tomorrow's "Indemnity Claim,"* CLM & Business Insurance Workers' Compensation Conference, Chicago, Illinois, May 24, 2017

*Do's and Don'ts of Fact Witnesses*, Marshall Dennehey Workers' Compensation Seminar, October 27, 2016

*Developing a Robust Return to Work Program*, CLM Atlanta, Atlanta, Georgia, May 2016

*Put Me In Coach: Top 10 Opportunities in Claims and Litigation Management*, Marshall Dennehey Workers' Compensation Seminar, October 22, 2015

*The Dream Team Approach to Workers' Compensation Case and Litigation Management*, 2015 CLM Annual Conference, Palm Desert, California, March 25, 2015

*Checks and Balances: A Dream Team Approach*, Marshall Dennehey Workers' Compensation Seminar, October 30, 2014

*A New Era of Workers' Compensation Claims? The Potential Impact of Social Trends*, claims workshop presented by The Graham Company, Philadelphia, PA, April 18, 2013

*You Can't Handle the Truth: A Mock Trial*, Marshall Dennehey Workers' Compensation Seminar, Philadelphia, PA, November 30, 2012

*Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Forms and Defenses*, MAC Risk Management, June 15, 2012

*Defense Consideration and Limiting Exposure in Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation*, Connor Strong & Buckelew, February 2, 2012

Judicial Panel, Annual Florida Workers' Compensation Institute Conference, August 2011

*The New Uniform-Based Task Management System (UBTMS) Workers' Compensation Code Set*, Annual Florida Workers' Compensation Institute Conference, August 2010

*Understanding the WC Claims Process*, Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry Workers' Compensation Roundtable, June 3, 2010

*The Litigation Process, Pennsylvania Self-Insured - A to Z Training Course*, March 11-12, 2010

*The Litigation Process, Pennsylvania Self-Insured - A to Z Training Course*, March 27-28, 2008

*Defense Considerations in Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation*, The Graham Company Employer's Training Course, November 29, 2007

*Successfully Navigating Workers' Compensation Law - Hot Topics in Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation - Case Law and Legislative Update*, Insurance Society of Philadelphia, October 12, 2006

*The Litigation Process, Pennsylvania Self-Insured - A to Z Training Course*, March 23-24, 2006

*Workers' Compensation Mock Trial*, The Addis Group's 2006 Risk Management Forum, March 23, 2006

*Workers' Compensation Mock Trial*, Churchill Dallas Risk Control Workshop, March 16-17, 2006

*Workers' Compensation Mock Trial*, Raffles Risk Control Workshop, Captive Resource, April 2005

*Tough Problems in Workers' Compensation 2003*, Pennsylvania Bar Institute, March 27, 2003

*Workers' Compensation 2003 Fall Section Meeting*, Pennsylvania Bar Association, September 2003

*The Litigation Process, Pennsylvania Self-Insured - A to Z Training Course*, April 11-12, 2002

*The Impact, Aftermath and Reality of Act 57*, Annual Conference, Pennsylvania Self-Insured, June 25, 1998

*Impairment Ratings from the Doctor's and the Attorney's Perspectives*, Philadelphia Bar Association/Workers' Compensation Section, June 17, 1998

*Legal Update*, Annual Conference, Pennsylvania Self-Insurers Association, June 27, 1997

*Impairment Rating Under Act 57*, REM, August 23, 1996

## PUBLISHED WORKS

"6 Key Workers' Compensation Safety and Data Analysis Considerations," *Risk & Insurance*, September 12, 2024

"Read A Banned Book - Bar Association Members Reflect on the Works That Have Stayed With Them," *The Philadelphia Lawyer*, Fall 2023

"Reflecting the Talent You Want to Recruit: Building and Achieving a Diverse Team and a Better Business," *CLM Magazine*, September 2023

"Why Contest Mental Health Claims in Workers' Comp When You Can Prevent Them to Begin With?" *Risk & Insurance*, March 29, 2023

"In Court: What's New on the Medical Marijuana Front for Workers' Compensation," *Risk & Insurance*, August 8, 2022

"Are You In or Out? Controlling Exposure During the Era of Remote Work," *CLM Magazine*, June 2022

"Workers' Compensation Claims Mounting? A Collaborative Review Process Can Help," *Risk & Insurance*, December 13, 2021

"Keep Your Eyes on the Road -- Distracted Driving and Workers' Comp Claims," *The Legal Intelligencer's Workers' Compensation Supplement*, October 13, 2020

"Reflections on a Pandemic," *Philadelphia Bar Reporter*, August 2020

"Driven to Distraction: How to Mitigate Distracted Driving Claims," *CLM Magazine*, March 2020

"Tempering the Tempest of Workplace Violence," *The Legal Intelligencer, Workers' Compensation Supplement*, October 15, 2019

"Fighting for Safety: How to Stop Workplace Violence in its Tracks," *CLM Magazine*, March 2019

"For My Next Trick: The Magic of Keeping Medical Only Claims From Turning Into Indemnity Claims," *CLM Magazine*, March 2018

"Eliminating Risk With Robust Return to Work Programs," *PRIMA Press*, June 2017

"Getting Healthy With Return-to-Work Programs," *Risk Management*, November 2016

"Controlling Exposures in Workers' Compensation Litigation: Ten Areas of Consideration for Employers," *Catalyst* magazine, page 28, Fall 2016

"The Dream Team Approach to Workers' Compensation Case Management," *Workers' Compensation* magazine, August/September 2015

"Beware: If We Snooze We May Lose. A Closer Look at LIBC-756 as Interpreted in *Muir v. WCAB* (Visteon Systems, LLC)," *Workers' Compensation* (PSIA Newsletter), October 2012

"Medical Suspension Has Life," *PSIA Newsletter*, May 2011

"A Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation 4-Phase Checklist," *PSIA Newsletter*, September 2009

"IRE's At Issue Again," *PSIA Newsletter*, May 2009

"IRE's At Issue Again," *Defense Digest*, March 2009

"Notice of Ability To Return To Work - LIBC 757 - An Analysis of *Allegis Group v. WCAB*," *PSIA Newsletter*, July 2006; and *Defense Digest*, June 2006

"Recent Developments," Pennsylvania Bar Association's Workers' Compensation Section, 2003 Fall Section Meeting, September 2003

"Case Law Update-Tough Problems in Workers' Compensation 2003," Pennsylvania Bar Association, March 2003

"Employer Liability for Employee Violation of Company Policy," *PSIA Newsletter*, November 2000

"Recourse for Judge's Monetary Settlement Recommendation," *PSIA Newsletter*, January 2000

Contributor to the PSIA Newsletter, 1996-2012

## **MEDIA COMMENTARY**

"Workers' Comp Making Gains in Attracting Claims Talent," *CLM Magazine*, November 2024

"Survivor: Workers' Compensation Edition," *Safety National Conference Chronicles*, June 16, 2020

## **RESULTS**

### **Termination Petition Involving Low Back Injury Successfully Prosecuted**

#### **Workers' Compensation**

**February 28, 2024**

We successfully prosecuted a termination petition involving a low back injury for a delivery truck service company. Our expert opined that the MRI failed to reveal any acute or post traumatic findings, that the claimant only sustained a soft tissue lumbar sprain/contusion and the exam revealed no objective findings. The workers' compensation judge found our expert's opinions were well-supported and terminated all liability.

### **Expert testimony by Board Certified Orthopedic Surgeon key to workers' comp win.**

#### **Workers' Compensation**

**November 1, 2022**

We successfully defended a claim petition on behalf of a well-known local hospital. The judge's decision was based upon a full recovery opinion by a Board Certified orthopedic surgeon who was found credible, competent and persuasive given his credentials and understanding of the claimant's extensive history, along with his review of post- and pre-injury records and diagnostic study films supporting no post-traumatic abnormalities.

### **Successful prosecution of termination petition on behalf of hospital.**

#### **Workers' Compensation**

**May 7, 2021**

We successfully prosecuted a termination petition on behalf of a well-known hospital and defended the claimant's petition for review to expand the nature of the accepted injury. The injury was accepted as a right distal bicep strain, which included a partial tear that resulted in surgery. The claimant asserted the injury should be expanded to also include right carpal tunnel, right elbow sprain and trigger fingers.

### **Successful defense of workers' compensation appeal involving penalty/termination petition.**

#### **Workers' Compensation**

**August 24, 2020**

We successfully defeated a workers' compensation appeal involving a claim penalty/termination petition on behalf of a worldwide youth adult development organization. A Medical Only Notice of Compensation Payable acknowledged liability for a skull contusion and denied any associated disability. The claimant alleged injuries to the cervical spine, head, eyes, a concussion and post concussive syndrome, resulting in total disability.

### **Successful prosecution of termination petition.**

#### **Workers' Compensation**

**March 1, 2020**

We successfully prosecuted a termination petition on behalf of a national water company. After securing all prior medical records, the defense uncovered a past medical history of similar complaints and treatment, and a later fall that was not disclosed by the claimant. After questioning, the claimant admitted to the nature and extent of his prior treatment, including office visits, prescription medication and MRIs, which supported our contention that his prior complaints were virtually identical.

## **SIGNIFICANT REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS**

*Nathan Armstrong v. W.C.A.B (Haines & Kibblehouse)* – the court held that the filing of a Temporary Notice of Compensation Payable and Notice of Compensation Denial acknowledging an injury and no disability was sufficient acknowledgement of an injury for purposes of seeking a utilization review treatment.

*Lane Enterprises, Inc. v. W.C.A.B. (Patton)* – prepared an *amicus curiae* "friend of the court" brief