

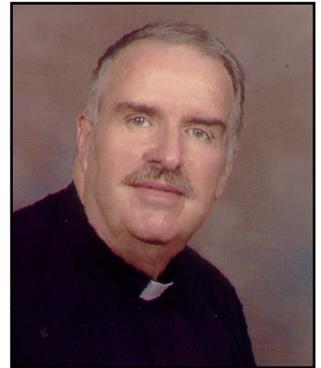


California Applicants Attorneys Association
 Affiliated with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Insurance companies use Utilization Review (UR) to deny and delay needed medical care. The care is usually recommended by the company's own chosen doctor.

Without consequences or effective penalties, insurers' UR is out of control. It has real impacts on injured workers.

Father Vince Connor's story follows –



Father Vince Connor

About Me: My name is Reverend Thomas Vincent Connor. I'm 72 years old, and live in Corona. I've been a Catholic priest for almost 44 years, 25 of those years as a prison chaplain in California correctional settings.

My Job and What Happened: For 19 years, I was employed as the Catholic Chaplain at the Youth Authority prison in Chino. I had an extensive background in working with college-age young adults, as well as doctoral level education in clinical psychology. At the prison, I conducted worship services, counseled the incarcerated young adults, provided facilitation and supervision for other faith Groups, such as Mormons, Christian Scientists, Seventh Day Adventists. I spent time with inmates in crisis, often when they experienced a death in their family. I was very fulfilled by the work/ministry. My employment record was stellar.

In 1995, everything suddenly changed. The administration hired a former San Quentin inmate as the new "Protestant" chaplain. With no theological or seminary training, he was not endorsed or ordained by any mainline Protestant denomination. He espoused the "Prosperity Gospel," - if you're a good Christian, you'll be very rich and never sick. From 1995 to 2000, he continually harassed the Catholic inmates, me, and the Catholic volunteers. He distributed volatile, bigoted anti-Catholic hate materials to the inmates.

What this has meant to my life: This intolerable situation caused horrific stress and trauma, I developed severe physical symptoms. I was always "on edge," tense, worried, depressed, unable to sleep, or concentrate on my work. I had chest pains, fatigue, nausea, and neck, shoulder, back and leg pain. In spite of the injury, and harassment, I stayed on the job until my physician told me the harassment was literally killing me. I finally was forced to leave my ministry, and was later determined to be 100% disabled. I had to retire from active priesthood. I struggle even to conduct one Mass a week at a local parish, and provide short committal services for our fallen veterans at the Riverside National Cemetery.

The care I was denied:

I was Catholic chaplain at Chino Youth Authority prison, serving inmates. The prison hired a former San Quentin inmate, who harassed me for being Catholic. I developed stress injuries and won medical treatment. SCIF has cut off my medicine over my doctor's protest.

How Utilization Review (UR) Delays and Denials Affect Me: I was awarded lifetime medical care for my work-related injuries. My physician prescribed arthritic and pain medications for 15 years; they're essential for me to function. I limit them as much as my body allows. I walk with a cane, but it's difficult. These medications are essential for me to keep active. Suddenly, after 15 years, State Compensation Insurance Fund (SCIF) denied my pain medication over my physician's insistence that it's essential. SCIF had no exam, no medical report, or response to justify denying pain medication. I ache, suffer, and agonize, limiting my ministry.

How Workers' Comp was supposed to help me: Workers' Compensation Insurance is supposed to provide medical care necessary to cure or relieve the effects of my work injury. The insurance company (SCIF) cut off my medication. My doctor demanded that SCIF approve the medicine, or provide an alternative pain management plan. SCIF ignored his request. It's immoral for an insurance company to deny approved treatment. Is there no penalty for SCIF's unconscionable misconduct?