

THE MEDICAL INQUIRY AND
CONCILIATION PANEL

and

THE DESIGN CLAIMS
CONCILIATION PANEL

**Report to the
Twenty-Seventh State Legislature**

Submitted by

**The Department of Commerce & Consumer Affairs
State of Hawai'i**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The *MICP and DCCP Annual Report to the Twenty-Seventh State Legislature* is submitted pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes ("HRS") §§671-20 and 672B-17, respectively, and covers the period of January 1, 2013, through October 31, 2013.

A. *The Medical Inquiry and Conciliation Panel*

The Medical Inquiry and Conciliation Panel ("MICP") is a program of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs ("DCCA"), State of Hawai'i. The MICP was established by Act 296, 2012 Session Laws of Hawai'i, HRS §671-11. Effective January 1, 2013, it replaced the former Medical Claims Conciliation Panel ("MCCP") program that had been in existence since 1976.

The MICP process is designed to help patients and their families obtain information regarding adverse events that they associate with medical treatment. The MICP process is intended to provide a non-adversarial forum for patients and their families to facilitate the conveying of information rather than assigning blame. The MICP process is also intended to narrow and define potential claims when complete resolution cannot be achieved and approaches issues of liability, causation or damages in the context of conciliation and mediation.

Panels will still be free to consider and discuss liability, causation, and/or damages, but they will now do so in the course of the new focus on conciliation or advisory efforts. The proceedings will no longer culminate in the issuance of an advisory decision, and the word "claim" has been eliminated from the MICP vocabulary.

The new MICP program changes the focus from the former requirement of rendering non-binding advisory decisions on liability and damages to a program designed to facilitate the resolution of inquiries regarding the rendering of professional services by health care providers that involve injury, death or other damages to a patient for all potential medical tort lawsuits in the State of Hawaii.

The primary purpose of the MICP program is achieved when the parties make conscientious and thorough presentations to the Panel. In such cases, the proceedings before the Panel provide the parties with more helpful interactions and more accurate views by the Panel of the relative merits of the inquiry, which should assist the parties in evaluating whether the inquiry should be pursued as a claim through the judicial system.

The MICP program also provides opportunities for the parties to exchange information in a relatively expedited and inexpensive manner, which in turn provides for opportunities for the parties to explore the conciliation of potentially meritorious inquiries through additional conciliation and/or mediation services outside of the MICP Panel prior to any claims being brought before the courts.

Finally, the requirements of exchanging information between the parties, and making conscientious and thorough presentations to the Panel, discourage the pursuit of frivolous or fraudulent inquiries prior to further legal proceedings being taken by the parties.

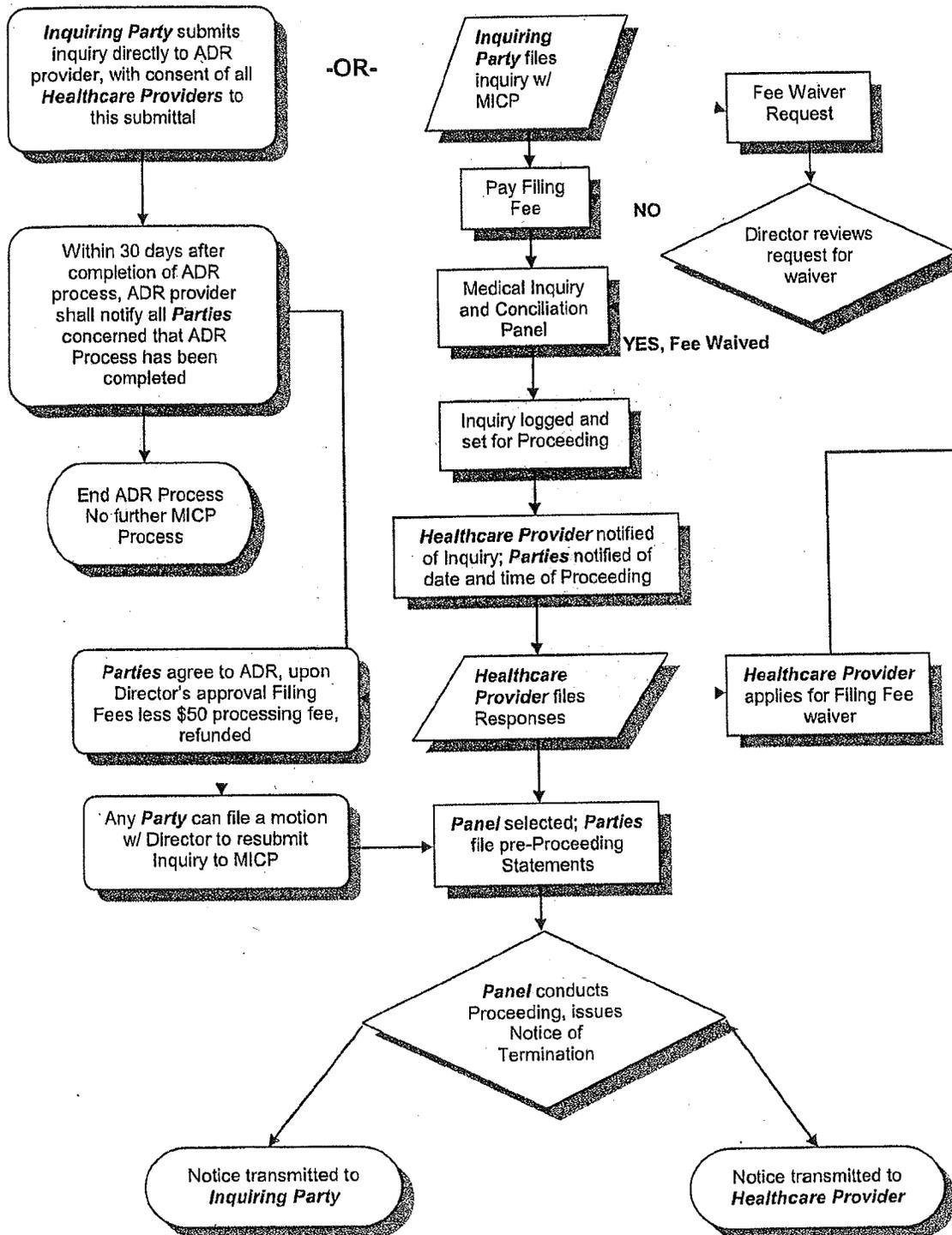
B. The Design Claims Conciliation Panel

Pursuant to Act 207, 2007 Session Laws of Hawai'i, starting on January 1, 2008, all malpractice claims against design professionals must be submitted to the Design Claims Conciliation Panel ("DCCP") program.

The DCCP is modeled on the former MCCP program and operates under the same procedures and guidelines that governed that program.

The DCCP program was not be affected by the implementation of the new MICP program in 2013.

Flowchart of the MICP Process



II. THE MEDICAL INQUIRY AND CONCILIATION PANEL PROGRAM

A. The Year in Review

Prior to the January 1, 2013 effective date of the MICP program, we had in place on our website a guide to the new program as well as all necessary forms to be used in connection with inquiries for processing by the program. To expedite the process for both inquiring and responding parties, the forms were “fillable” so that they could be prepared online.

In addition, two training programs for program participants were held. In December of 2012, a program designed for attorneys was presented to a maximum capacity audience in a conference room at the Medical School. It was attended by MCCC panelists who wanted to serve on the new MICP panels as well as attorneys who represented both plaintiffs and defendants in medical malpractice cases. In April of 2013, another training program was held, under the auspices of the Medical School, for medical professionals who wanted to be educated about the new process as well as serve as panelists in the future.

Both of these programs were videotaped and can be viewed without charge. The first one is located at <http://blip.tv/2012WorkforceSummit/medical-malpractice-changes-training-formmicp-video-1-6482430> and <http://blip.tv/2012WorkforceSummit/micp-training-pt-2-6482490>. The second one is located at <http://blip.tv/2012WorkforceSummit/2013-hawaii-health-workforce-summit-medical-malpractice-changes-in-hawaii-6611871>.

We have also continued our prior efforts at pre-screening cases to eliminate those that should not be brought before the MICP. Such cases involve, for example, claims brought on behalf of Hawaii prisoners serving out their sentences in Arizona against health care providers in Arizona that are not Hawaii licensees. Another example of such cases are those brought against pharmaceutical manufacturers who are not defined as health care providers by the MICP statutes.

MICP informational materials and forms are available to parties and interested persons in various formats and media, including access via DCCA’s internet web page:

http://hawaii.gov/cca/oah/forms/micp_/.

B. The Operations of the MICP

1. Expedited Inquiry Filing Process

In 1997, the MCCC program initiated the MCCC Fast Track Filing System, which allowed a claim to be heard within four (4) months from the date the claim is filed with the MCCC program, or even sooner, if all of the parties agree. Additionally, because these expedited cases utilized other facilities to host the hearings, the MCCC program had been able to schedule more hearings for claims brought under the regular MCCC filing process because of the increased availability of the MCCC hearings room.

The former MCCC Fast Track Filing System has been incorporated into the new MICP procedures and thus continues to be available to the parties. In 2013, there were four (4) inquiries filed under the expedited inquiry process.

2. Electronic Filing of Documents

The MICP program provides an optional electronic filing process that allows participating parties to file, distribute, and receive documents electronically.

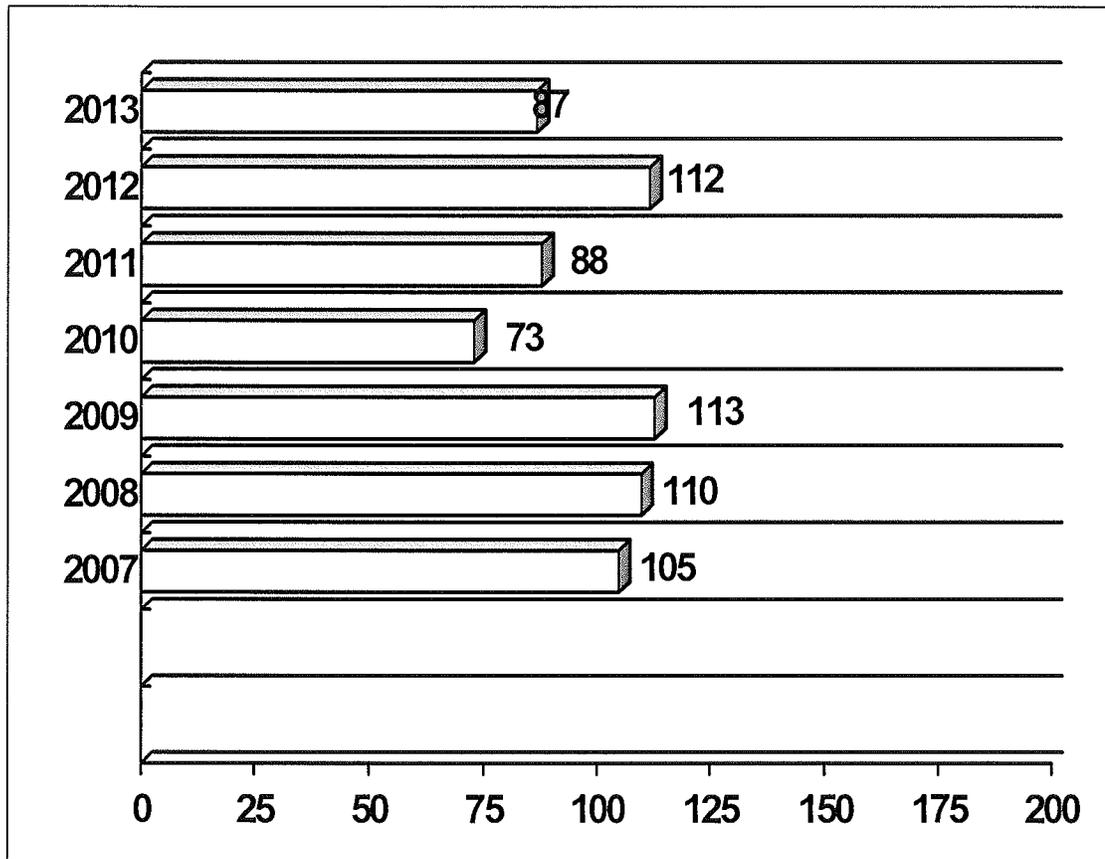
Technologically capable parties have been utilizing this electronic filing option more frequently, including submitting voluminous records, documents, and graphics via CD or DVD.

C. Statistical Overview of the MICP Program

1. Number of Inquiries Filed in 2013

As of October 31, 2013, there were 87 inquiries filed with the MICP program. This figure can be compared to the number of claims filed under the former MCCC program.

Figure 1: Claims and Inquiries Filed from 2007 through 2013 ¹



In regards to parties who are unable to pay the required filing fees, in 2013, 40 requests to waive the MICP filing fees were granted by the Director. ²

¹ The number of claims for years prior to 2013 is for the entire calendar year. Due to reporting deadlines necessary for timely submission of this Report, the number of inquiries for 2013 listed in the text of the report refers to the first ten (10) months of the year.

² The MICP utilizes the same financial guidelines to determine a party's eligibility for waiver of MICP filing fees as the courts use in determining whether a party can proceed *in forma pauperis* in a judicial proceeding.

Also in 2013, 28 MICP inquiries were filed by parties that were not represented by attorneys.

Finally, three (3) inquiries were rejected because they were not accompanied by certificates of consultation as required by HRS §671-12.5.

2. Disposition of Inquiries Heard in 2013

As of October 31, 2013, 17 inquiries were heard by the MICP. In addition, a total of 12 inquiries were dismissed, withdrawn or otherwise terminated. One inquiry resulted in the parties entering into a formal mediation conducted outside of the MICP program.

During the first half of 2013, we experienced a great deal of activity in the MCCP program because of a backlog of hearings created by a substantial number of MCCP filings during the last part of 2012. Consequently, the number of MICP proceedings was low due to the need to work through that MCCP backlog. It is most likely that there will be a substantial increase in MICP proceedings in 2014 now that the MCCP backlog has been eliminated.

Of the inquiries heard by the MICP in 2013, five (5) were proceedings in which the claimants were not represented by attorneys (*pro se* claimants).

Because the MICP panels do not issue opinions on actionable negligence, we do not report on the substantive disposition of inquiries under the MICP program.

III. DESIGN CLAIMS CONCILIATION PANEL ANNUAL REPORT

A. Creation of the DCCP

The DCCP was created by the 2007 Legislature effective January 1, 2008 (Act 207, 2007 Session Laws of Hawai'i).

Figure 2: Disposition of DCCP Claims

Total claims filed in 2013:	8
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Total number of hearings conducted:	1
Actionable negligence found	0
Some Respondents negligent	0
No negligence found	1
Total Damages Recommended by Panel	None

Disposition of claims in 2013:	
Withdrawn/dismissed	1
Settled	0
Mediation/ADR	2
Tolling period lapsed	0

The five remaining claims not represented on this Figure were still pending as of the close of the reporting period.

IV. CONCLUSION

We are continuing to work with the parties and participants in the MICP and DCCP programs to find new ways to allow these programs to fulfill their statutory and philosophical obligations. Our particular focus in the coming year will be refining the implementation of the new MICP program.

We are also very committed to modernizing every appropriate component of the MICP and DCCP processes to allow for maximum access by the parties and the expedited processing of claims.