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SACRAMENTO CONVENTION CENTER

DEFENDING SAFETY OFFICER HEART PRESUMPTION CLAIMS

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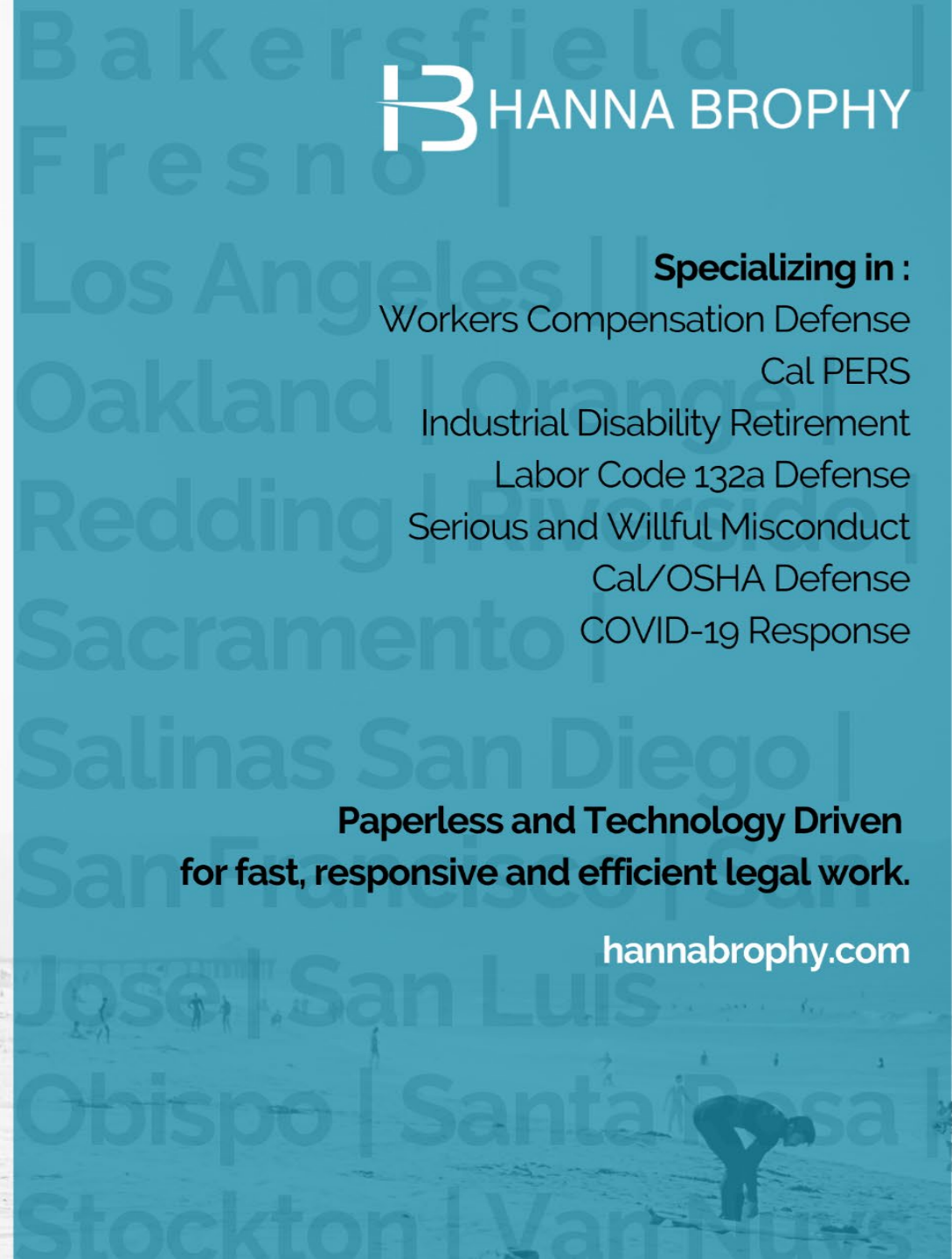
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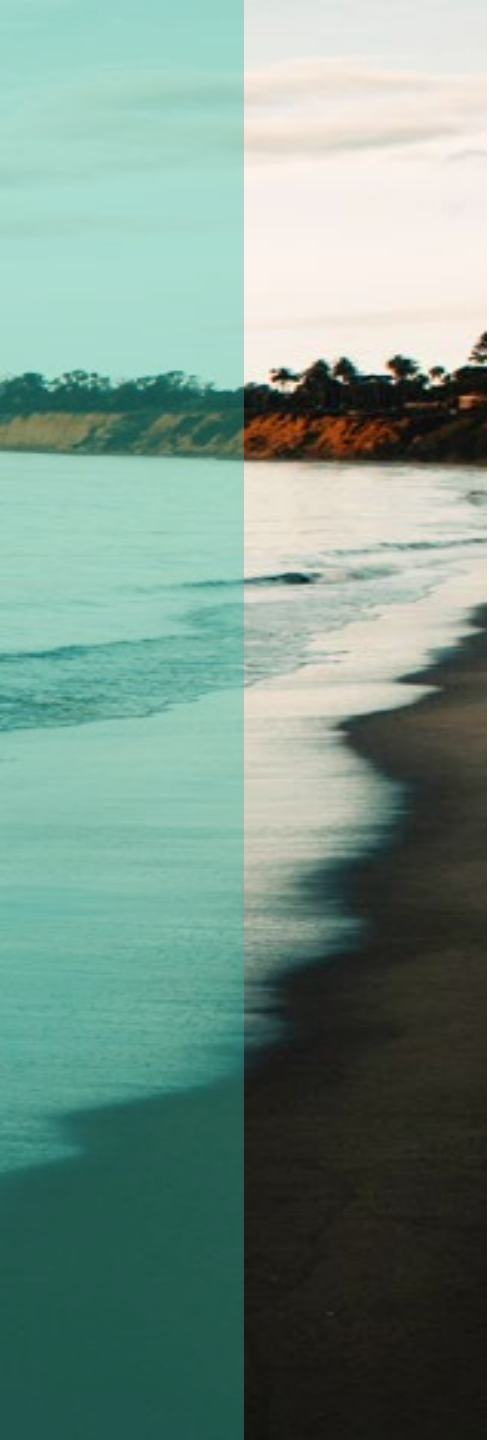
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Facts and law change frequently. Please consult your attorney for the most recent laws affecting your decisions and claims handling strategies.

HYPERTENSIVE HEART DISEASE

Left Ventricular Hypertrophy (30-49 WPI).

No non-industrial apportionment if the presumption is applicable.

No binding case law on whether or not diastolic dysfunction is end-organ damage.

PQME's traditionally make a diagnosis of LVH if the LVPW and IVSD measure higher than 1.0 cm in males, .9 cm in females. Some facilities will use 1.1 cm for males.

LEFT VENTRICULAR HYPERTROPHY

Thickening of the walls of the lower left heart chamber.

Most common cause of LVH is sustained, uncontrolled blood pressure.

Usually asymptomatic in early stages, symptoms can include chest pain, shortness of breath, eventually heart failure.

Can be reversed if blood pressure gets under control. (Framingham study)

ALTERNATIVE METHOD TO DIAGNOSING LVH

American Society of Echocardiography guidelines.

Adopted by other organizations.

Use the LV Mass Index which takes into account body characteristics.

(Height, weight, sex)

Many diagnoses of LVH eliminated , commonly in overweight and taller individuals.

CALCULATING THE LV MASS INDEX

Abbreviations used by facilities are not standard.

Note, the measurements of the left ventricle posterior wall and interventricular septal wall are measured at the diastole.

Be careful re: unit of measurement, mm v cm, metric vs. imperial.

STRATEGY

Cardiologists are more likely than general internists to use this methodology. Be strategic when selecting Panel Specialty.

Only use facilities certified by the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission to perform echocardiograms and other diagnostics such as the Cardiac MRI.

ANALYZING THE ECHOCARDIOGRAM

Most echocardiograms will include reference to its technical quality (good, fair, or difficult). Difficult to get a good image of the heart with a transthoracic echocardiogram in larger individuals.

Alternative is the Cardiac MRI or a CT angiogram. Some Drs. will opt for a repeat echocardiogram.

CT Angiogram is an invasive test.

ADDRESSING COMMON CRITICISMS #1

Argument: The use of the LV Mass Index is not referenced in the AMA Guides.

Answer: The AMA guides does not specify any particular methodology for the diagnosis of Left Ventricular Hypertrophy.

There is no reference range in the AMA guides.

ADDRESSING COMMON CRITICISMS #2

Argument: The AMA Guides does not specify the use of the Cardiac MRI in diagnosing left ventricular hypertrophy.

Answer: The AMA Guides were published in 2000. Doctors are allowed to use their clinical judgement. The Cardiac MRI is now in common use. Recent literature is positive about the use of the Cardiac MRI in evaluating heart conditions.

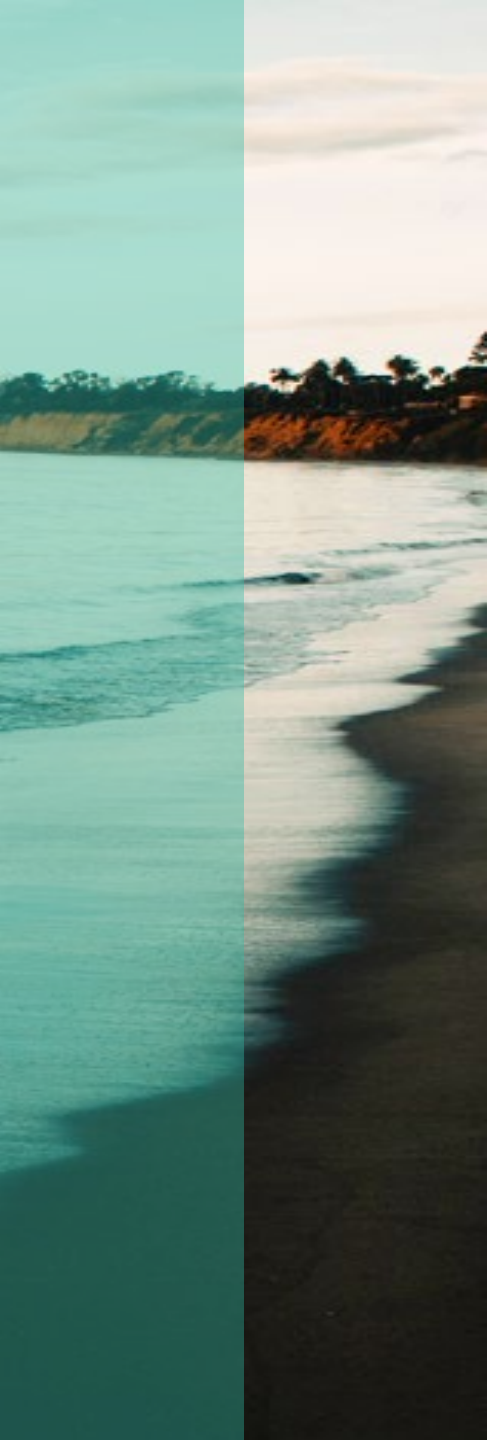
APPORTIONING DISABILITY

The presumption doesn't preclude apportionment among multiple dates of injury. But see *Bates*.

NSAIDS are known to aggravate hypertension. The most common NSAIDs are aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen.

Unresolved orthopedic issues and sleep apnea

QUESTIONS



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