

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Benchmark's Mission?

Benchmark Medical Consultants' mission is to provide exceptional education, training and administrative support to clinically active, well-credentialed, quality healthcare professionals, as well as value added services to legal, insurance, government, and self-insured agencies.

2. What is Benchmark's relationship to the consultant?

All consultants are independent contractors to Benchmark. Benchmark supplies all administrative services to the consultant, such as: Reception, scheduling, record organizing, transcription, report delivery, billing and collection of fees, legal calendaring coordination.

3. How does Benchmark make money?

Benchmark serves as the administrative back office to all the consultants in the Benchmark network, who pay Benchmark for this service. As a result of Benchmark's efficient operations and the economies of scale obtained by servicing our large consultant base, everyone wins from this relationship. Our consultants receive a specialized, world-class back office that is more efficient and cost-effective than using their clinical staff. Our clients don't get charged with fees, receive premier treatment and service, and gain access premium-quality independent consultants at rates that are at or below industry standards.

4. What is Benchmark's relationship to the client?

Benchmark is a resource for the insurance, legal, and self-insured industry to use for litigation support. Benchmark's knowledgeable medical-legal support staff makes working with our consultants and us much more efficient, successful and rewarding.

5. What are Benchmark's credentials?

Benchmark is an ACCME accredited CME (Continuing Medical Education) provider and a CLE (Continuing Legal Education) provider. Benchmark is the only medical-legal firm that provides education both to medical and legal professionals.

- Benchmark is a Preferred Vendor accredited by AM Best
- Benchmark is the only medical-legal vendor accepted to exhibit at the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgery
- Benchmark is endorsed by the California Orthopedic Association

6. What is the consultants' turn-around time for a report?

There is a turn around time of approximately two weeks for record review consultations and 30 days for examination reports. Rush report preparation and delivery available are available.

(FAQs Continued)

7. Do I have access to my consultant?

Absolutely. Access is more readily available, in a more timely manner due to the unique relationship Benchmark has with the consultants. Unlike a clinical office where staff and consultants are too busy, Benchmark arranges for mutually convenient times for consultations with your consultant, and allows you to save time and money by not playing "phone tag." Direct communication can be arranged on request

8. Who writes the reports?

Consultants dictate their own reports from beginning to end using various types of dictation equipment (most commonly used is digital dictation). The dictation is transcribed. The rough draft reports are reviewed by the consultant, who makes necessary changes for the transcription staff. The final report is reviewed and approved by the consultant with delivery to the client.

9. Does Benchmark help the consultant reach a conclusion or form an opinion?

No. The opinion is always that of the consultant.

10. Does Benchmark edit reports for the consultant?

No. Consultants must dictate, modify, and finalize their own work. Benchmark staff will proofread for grammatical and typographical errors only.

11. Does Benchmark help the consultant review the information provided in the file?

No – Benchmark puts all the information into chronological order so that the information can be easily read "like a book." The consultant is responsible for reviewing ALL information in the file.

12. Are the doctor's reports on Benchmark letter head or the doctor's letter head?

The reports are on the doctor's letter head with Benchmark Medical Consultant's address. Only on the invoice does it reference Benchmark's name as the agent for accounting.

13. If the case is going to trial and we find out last minute or after hours that we need the consultant to come in earlier or at different time during trial will we be able to get ahold of them?

By this point in the case you will have great access to both our legal calendaring department and to the consultants so they will be accessible to you. In certain cases the consultant may not be able to re-schedule with only hours notice due to their medical specialty: (for example if they are a practicing neurosurgeon and in surgery) but we will do our best to make sure the doctor is available as we realize how important this is to your case. We have incredible success with the legal calendaring of our consultants and have very happy clients.

(FAQs Continued)

14. Do we need to specify issues in a letter to Benchmark?

There should be a letter addressed to the "consultant" - not Benchmark. We are not the consultant, just the secretaries. The letter is nice to have to verify client name, address, spelling, claimant information, etc. However, there is no need to spell out issues in a letter for facts about the case. We can set up telephone conferences prior to the examination or after for discussion purposes. Benchmark will always call prior to an exam for a consultant to obtain due dates, to see if anything new has happened between the time of setting the appointment and the appointment dates, to verify all records have been received and to obtain questions for the consultant to address, if you would like.

15. What is discoverable during the case from Benchmark Medical Consultants?

The file is the consultant's file. Therefore, there is nothing in the consultant's file other than that which he/she produces, writes, documents, etc. Files usually contain, confirming letter, records sent by client, consultant examination documentation, consultant reports, billings, etc. Benchmark is the custodian of records, only for subpoena purposes. Subpoenas are always provided to the client on the file prior to providing any information from the file to the opposing counsel. This is really the client's issue; however, as long as the consultant remains a consultant, nothing in their file is discoverable. If the consultant is then listed as an expert, discovery law applies. The important point is that you, the client, have access to the consultant for consultations, meetings, etc.

16. Where does Benchmark have offices?

Benchmark's corporate office is in Sacramento, California. We have served clients in over 38 states and Guam. We have many satellite offices. We specialize in providing consultant services in difficult to serve locations.

17. What is your turn-around time and do you offer rush service?

Turnaround for record reviews are two weeks and examination reports are 30 days. Statistically, record reviews have been going out within 10 days and examination reports within 20 days. Rush assignments can be completed within one to 14 days, at an additional cost as follows:

Independent Medical Evaluation

0-2 days: \$500 rush fee

3-5 days: \$400 rush fee

6-20 days: \$200 rush fee

Anything after 21 days would not have a rush fee.

Record Review

0-2 days: \$500 rush fee

3-5 days: \$400 rush fee

6-13 days: \$200 rush fee

Anything after 14 days would not have a rush fee.