

Introduction to 2022 Update

In December of 2019 a deadly virus (COVID-19) with no known vaccine was discovered in China, and a worldwide pandemic began. There were a few cases in the United States in January but by April of 2020 the pandemic was so widespread that the entire country shut down for several months to avoid the unchecked spread of COVID-19. The Industrial Commission issued guidelines related to the virus and temporarily modified its rules for personal appearances at hearings and mediations. For the most part, litigation was conducted by remote access, usually by Zoom or WebEx, and most of the employees of the Industrial Commission worked from their homes. As of December 2021 over 900,000 Americans had died of Covid-19 (over 20,000 in N.C.) and approximately 64.5% of the U.S population (58.8% in N.C.) had been fully vaccinated (two shots). As the Industrial Commission attempts to return to pre-Covid status, practitioners should monitor the Industrial Commission website for updates and guidance.