



April 13, 2020

Chairman Michael J. Brennan
Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission
100 W. Randolph St. Suite 8-200
Chicago, IL 60601

Chairman Brennan,

On behalf of the Illinois Restaurant Association, I am writing to you to state our organization's firm opposition to the emergency rule issued by the Commission that rebuttably presumes that an individual's exposure arises out of and in the course of and rebuttably presumes to be causally connected to their employment.

The safety and welfare of the 588,000 employees that work in the restaurant industry are the top priority for every restaurant owner in this state. However, the restaurant industry has seen catastrophic financial losses due to COVID-19, and it is estimated that upwards of 15% of restaurants may never reopen their doors.

The sudden policy change could not have come at a worse time for the state's 25,000+ restaurants that are simply struggling to keep their doors open at this point. It will sharply increase costs on employers by forcing them to pay for an employee's medical expenses if they are diagnosed with COVID-19 without necessary proof that the illness was contracted at the workplace.

I urge the Commission to reconsider this drastic policy change as they consider the unintended consequences of placing such massive financial burdens on small restaurants across the state.

Sincerely,

Sam Toia
President & CEO
Illinois Restaurant Association



Cc: Commissioner L. Elizabeth Coppoletti
Commissioner Barbara Flores
Commissioner Kathryn Doerries
Commissioner Stephen Mathis
Commissioner Douglas McCarthy
Commissioner Marc Parker
Commissioner Maria Portela
Commissioner Deborah Simpson
Commissioner Thomas Tyrrell