1	STATE OF OKLAHOMA
2	1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)
3	SENATE BILL 95 By: Seifried
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7	AS INTRODUCED
8	An Act relating to workers' compensation; amending
9	85A O.S. 2021, Section 2, which relates to definitions; defining term; updating statutory
10	language; updating statutory references; and providing an effective date.
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13	BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:
14	SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 85A O.S. 2021, Section 2, is
15	amended to read as follows:
16	Section 2. As used in the Administrative Workers' Compensation
17	Act:
18	1. "Actually dependent" means a surviving spouse, a child or
19	any other person who receives one-half (1/2) or more of his or her
20	support from the employee;
21	2. "Carrier" means any stock company, mutual company, or
22	reciprocal or interinsurance exchange authorized to write or carry
23	on the business of workers' compensation insurance in this state.
24 27	Whenever required by the context, the term <u>"carrier"</u> carrier shall

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1 be deemed to include duly qualified self-insureds or self-insured 2 groups;

3 3. "Case management" means the ongoing coordination, by a case 4 manager, of health care services provided to an injured or disabled 5 worker, including but not limited to systematically monitoring the 6 treatment rendered and the medical progress of the injured or 7 disabled worker; ensuring that any treatment plan follows all 8 appropriate treatment protocols, utilization controls and practice 9 parameters; assessing whether alternative health care services are 10 appropriate and delivered in a cost-effective manner based upon 11 acceptable medical standards; and ensuring that the injured or 12 disabled worker is following the prescribed health care plan; 13 4. "Case manager" means a person who is a registered nurse with 14 a current, active unencumbered license from the Oklahoma Board of 15 Nursing, or possesses one or more of the following certifications 16 which indicate the individual has a minimum number of years of case 17 management experience, has passed a national competency test and 18 regularly obtains continuing education hours to maintain 19 certification: 20 Certified Disability Management Specialist (CDMS), a. 21 Certified Case Manager (CCM), b. 22 Certified Rehabilitation Registered Nurse (CRRN), с. 23 d. Case Manager - Certified (CMC),

e. Certified Occupational Health Nurse (COHN), or

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f. Certified Occupational Health Nurse Specialist (COHN-S);

3 5. "Certified workplace medical plan" means an organization of 4 health care providers or any other entity, certified by the State 5 Commissioner of Health, that is authorized to enter into a 6 contractual agreement with an employer, a group self-insurance 7 association plan, an employer's workers' compensation insurance 8 carrier, a third-party administrator or an insured to provide 9 medical care under the Administrative Workers' Compensation Act. 10 Certified plans shall only include plans which provide medical 11 services and payment for services on a fee-for-service basis to 12 medical providers;

13 6. "Child" means a natural or adopted son or daughter of the 14 employee under eighteen (18) years of age; or a natural or adopted 15 son or daughter of an employee eighteen (18) years of age or over 16 who is physically or mentally incapable of self-support; or any 17 natural or adopted son or daughter of an employee eighteen (18) 18 years of age or over who is actually dependent; or any natural or 19 adopted son or daughter of an employee between eighteen (18) and 20 twenty-three (23) years of age who is enrolled as a full-time 21 student in any accredited educational institution. The term "child" 22 child includes a posthumous child, a child legally adopted or one 23 for whom adoption proceedings are pending at the time of death, an

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1 actually dependent stepchild or an actually dependent acknowledged 2 child born out of wedlock;

³ 7. "Claimant" means a person who claims benefits for an injury ⁴ or occupational disease pursuant to the provisions of the ⁵ Administrative Workers' Compensation Act;

6 8. "Commission" means the <u>Oklahoma</u> Workers' Compensation 7 Commission;

8 9. a. "Compensable injury" means damage or harm to the 9 physical structure of the body, or damage or harm to 10 prosthetic appliances, including eyeglasses, contact 11 lenses, or hearing aids, of which the major cause is 12 either an accident, cumulative trauma or occupational 13 disease arising out of the course and scope of 14 employment. An "accident" means an event involving 15 factors external to the employee that:

16 (1) was unintended, unanticipated, unforeseen, 17 unplanned and unexpected,

(2) occurred at a specifically identifiable time and place,

- 20 (3) occurred by chance or from unknown causes, or
 21 (4) was independent of sickness, mental incapacity,
 22 bodily infirmity or any other cause.
 23 b. "Compensable injury" Compensable injury does not
- 24 include:

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1		1)	injury to any active participant in assaults or
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			combats which, although they may occur in the
3			workplace, are the result of non-employment-
4			related hostility or animus of one, both, or all
5			of the combatants and which assault or combat
6			amounts to a deviation from customary duties;
7			provided, however, injuries caused by horseplay
8			shall not be considered to be compensable
9			injuries, except for innocent victims,
10	(2)	injury incurred while engaging in or performing
11			or as the result of engaging in or performing any
12			recreational or social activities for the
13			employee's personal pleasure,
14	(3)	injury which was inflicted on the employee at a
15			time when employment services were not being
16			performed or before the employee was hired or
16 17			after the employment relationship was terminated,
17	(4)	
17 18	(4)	after the employment relationship was terminated,
17 18 19	(4)	after the employment relationship was terminated, injury if the accident was caused by the use of
17 18 19 20	(4)	after the employment relationship was terminated, injury if the accident was caused by the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs
17 18 19 20 21	(4)	after the employment relationship was terminated, injury if the accident was caused by the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs used in contravention of physician's orders. If
	(4)	after the employment relationship was terminated, injury if the accident was caused by the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs used in contravention of physician's orders. If a biological specimen is collected within twenty-
17 18 19 20 21 22	(4)	after the employment relationship was terminated, injury if the accident was caused by the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs used in contravention of physician's orders. If a biological specimen is collected within twenty- four (24) hours of the employee being injured or

1 Oklahoma Office of the Chief Medical Examiner if the injured employee does not survive for at least twenty-four (24) hours after the injury and the employee tests positive for intoxication, an illegal controlled substance, or a legal controlled substance used in contravention to a treating physician's orders, or refuses to undergo the drug and alcohol testing, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that the injury was caused by the use of alcohol, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs used in contravention of physician's orders. This presumption may only be overcome if the employee proves by clear and convincing evidence that his or her state of intoxication had no causal relationship to the injury, any strain, degeneration, damage or harm to, or (5) disease or condition of, the eye or

19 musculoskeletal structure or other body part 20 resulting from the natural results of aging, 21 osteoarthritis, arthritis, or degenerative 22 process including, but not limited to, 23 degenerative joint disease, degenerative disc 24 disease, degenerative

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1		spondylosis/spondylolisthesis and spinal
2		stenosis, or
3	(6)	any preexisting condition except when the
4		treating physician clearly confirms an
5		identifiable and significant aggravation incurred
6		in the course and scope of employment.
7	c. A co	mpensable injury shall be established by medical
8	evid	ence supported by objective findings as defined in
9	para	graph 31 of this section.
10	d. The	injured employee shall prove by a preponderance of
11	the	evidence that he or she has suffered a compensable
12	inju	ry.
13	e. Bene	fits shall not be payable for a condition which
14	resu	lts from a non-work-related independent
15	inte	rvening cause following a compensable injury which
16	caus	es or prolongs disability $_{m{ au}}$ <u>or</u> aggravation $_{m{ au}}$ or
17	requ	ires treatment. A non-work-related independent
18	inte	rvening cause does not require negligence or
19	reck	lessness on the part of a claimant.
20	f. An ei	mployee who suffers a compensable injury shall be
21	enti	tled to receive compensation as prescribed in this
22	act	the Administrative Workers' Compensation Act.
23	Notw	ithstanding other provisions of law, if it is
24	dete	rmined that a compensable injury did not occur,
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the employee shall not be entitled to compensation under this act the Administrative Workers'

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Compensation Act;

4 10. "Compensation" means the money allowance payable to the 5 employee or to his or her dependents and includes the medical 6 services and supplies provided for in Section 50 of this title and 7 funeral expenses;

8 11. "Consequential injury" means injury or harm to a part of 9 the body that is a direct result of the injury or medical treatment 10 to the part of the body originally injured in the claim. The 11 Commission shall not make a finding of a consequential injury unless 12 it is established by objective medical evidence that medical 13 treatment for such part of the body is required;

14 12. "Continuing medical maintenance" means medical treatment 15 that is reasonable and necessary to maintain <u>a</u> claimant's condition 16 resulting from the compensable injury or illness after reaching 17 maximum medical improvement. Continuing medical maintenance shall 18 not include diagnostic tests, surgery, injections, counseling, 19 physical therapy, or pain management devices or equipment;

13. "Course and scope of employment" means an activity of any kind or character for which the employee was hired and that relates to and derives from the work, business, trade or profession of an employer, and is performed by an employee in the furtherance of the affairs or business of an employer. The term includes activities

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¹ conducted on the premises of an employer or at other locations
² designated by an employer and travel by an employee in furtherance
³ of the affairs of an employer that is specifically directed by the
⁴ employer. This term does not include:

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- an employee's transportation to and from his or her place of employment,
- b. travel by an employee in furtherance of the affairs of an employer if the travel is also in furtherance of personal or private affairs of the employee,
- 10c. any injury occurring in a parking lot or other common11area adjacent to an employer's place of business12before the employee clocks in or otherwise begins work13for the employer or after the employee clocks out or14otherwise stops work for the employer unless the15employer owns or maintains exclusive control over the16area, or
- 17d. any injury occurring while an employee is on a work18break, unless the injury occurs while the employee is19on a work break inside the employer's facility or in20an area owned by or exclusively controlled by the21employer and the work break is authorized by the22employee's supervisor;

14. "Cumulative trauma" means an injury to an employee that is
caused by the combined effect of repetitive physical activities

1 extending over a period of time in the course and scope of 2 employment. Cumulative trauma shall not mean fatigue, soreness or 3 general aches and pain that may have been caused, aggravated, 4 exacerbated or accelerated by the employee's course and scope of 5 employment. Cumulative trauma shall have resulted directly and 6 independently of all other causes;

7 15. "Death" means only death resulting from compensable injury 8 as defined in paragraph 9 of this section;

9 16. "Disability" means incapacity because of compensable injury 10 to earn, in the same or any other employment, substantially the same 11 amount of wages the employee was receiving at the time of the 12 compensable injury;

13 17. "Drive-away operations" includes every person engaged in 14 the business of transporting and delivering new or used vehicles by 15 driving, either singly or by towbar, saddle-mount or full-mount 16 method, or any combination thereof, with or without towing a 17 privately owned vehicle;

18 "Employee" means any person, including a minor, in the 18. a. 19 service of an employer under any contract of hire or 20 apprenticeship, written or oral, expressed or implied, 21 but excluding one whose employment is casual and not 22 in the course of the trade, business, profession, or 23 occupation of his or her employer and excluding one 24 who is required to perform work for a municipality or _ _

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county or the state or federal government on having been convicted of a criminal offense or while incarcerated. <u>"Employee" Employee</u> shall also include a member of the Oklahoma National Guard while in the performance of duties only while in response to state orders and any authorized voluntary or uncompensated worker, rendering services as a firefighter, law enforcement officer or emergency management worker. Travel by a police officer, fireman, or a member of a first aid or rescue squad, in responding to and returning from an emergency, shall be deemed to be in the course of employment.

b. The term <u>"employee"</u> employee shall not include:

14 any person for whom an employer is liable under (1)15 any Act of Congress for providing compensation to 16 employees for injuries, disease or death arising 17 out of and in the course of employment including, 18 but not limited to, the Federal Employees' 19 Compensation Act, the Federal Employers' 20 Liability Act, the Longshore and Harbor Workers' 21 Compensation Act and the Jones Act, to the extent 22 his or her employees are subject to such acts, 23 (2) any person who is employed in agriculture, 24 ranching or horticulture by an employer who had a _ _

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gross annual payroll in the preceding calendar year of less than One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) wages for agricultural, ranching or horticultural workers, or any person who is employed in agriculture, ranching or horticulture who is not engaged in operation of motorized machines. This exemption applies to any period of time for which such employment exists, irrespective of whether or not the person is employed in other activities for which the exemption does not apply. If the person is employed for part of a year in exempt activities and for part of a year in nonexempt activities, the employer shall be responsible for providing workers' compensation only for the period of time for which the person is employed in nonexempt activities,

associate or broker, paid on a commission basis, (4) any person employed by an employer with five or fewer total employees, all of whom are related within the second degree by blood or marriage to the employer, all of whom are dependents living in the household of the employer, or all of whom

any person who is a licensed real estate sales

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are a combination of such relatives and dependents. If the employer is not a natural person such relative shall be related within the second degree by blood or marriage to a person who owns fifty percent (50%) or more of the employer, or such dependent shall be in the household of a person who owns fifty percent (50%) or more of the employer,

(5) any person employed by an employer which is a youth sports league which qualifies for exemption from federal income taxation pursuant to federal law,

(6) sole proprietors, members of a partnership, individuals who are party to a franchise agreement as set out by the Federal Trade Commission franchise disclosure rule, 16 CFR 436.1 through 436.11, members of a limited liability company who own at least ten percent (10%) of the capital of the limited liability company or any stockholder-employees of a corporation who own ten percent (10%) or more stock in the corporation, unless they elect to be covered by a policy of insurance covering

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1 benefits under the Administrative Workers' Compensation Act,

- (7) any person providing or performing voluntary service who receives no wages for the services other than meals, drug or alcohol rehabilitative therapy, transportation, lodging or reimbursement for incidental expenses except for volunteers specifically provided for in subparagraph a of this paragraph,
- 10 (8) a person, commonly referred to as an owner-11 operator, who owns or leases a truck-tractor or 12 truck for hire, if the owner-operator actually 13 operates the truck-tractor or truck and if the 14 person contracting with the owner-operator is not 15 the lessor of the truck-tractor or truck. 16 Provided, however, an owner-operator shall not be 17 precluded from workers' compensation coverage 18 under the Administrative Workers' Compensation 19 Act if the owner-operator elects to participate 20 as a sole proprietor, 21
 - (9) a person referred to as a drive-away owneroperator who privately owns and utilizes a tow vehicle in drive-away operations and operates independently for hire, if the drive-away owner-

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1 operator actually utilizes the tow vehicle and if 2 the person contracting with the drive-away owner-3 operator is not the lessor of the tow vehicle. 4 Provided, however, a drive-away owner-operator 5 shall not be precluded from workers' compensation 6 coverage under the Administrative Workers' 7 Compensation Act if the drive-away owner-operator 8 elects to participate as a sole proprietor, and 9 (10) any person who is employed as a domestic servant 10 or as a casual worker in and about a private home 11 or household, which private home or household had 12 a gross annual payroll in the preceding calendar 13 year of less than Fifty Thousand Dollars 14 (\$50,000.00) for such workers, and 15 (11) any person engaging in a temporary work 16 arrangement that allows the individual to observe 17 a work environment and gain work experience 18 without the expectation of financial 19 compensation; 20 19. "Employer" means a natural person, partnership,

association, limited liability company, corporation, and the legal representatives of a deceased employer, or the receiver or trustee of a person, partnership, association, corporation, or limited liability company, departments, instrumentalities and institutions

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1 of this state and divisions thereof, counties and divisions thereof, 2 public trusts, boards of education and incorporated cities or towns 3 and divisions thereof, employing a person included within the term 4 "employee" employee as defined in this section. Employer may also 5 mean the employer's workers' compensation insurance carrier, if 6 applicable. Except as provided otherwise, this act the 7 Administrative Workers' Compensation Act applies to all public and 8 private entities and institutions;

9 20. "Employment" includes work or labor in a trade, business, 10 occupation or activity carried on by an employer or any authorized 11 voluntary or uncompensated worker rendering services as a 12 firefighter, peace officer or emergency management worker;

13 21. "Evidence-based" means expert-based, literature-supported 14 and outcomes validated by well-designed randomized trials when such 15 information is available and which uses the best available evidence 16 to support medical decision making;

17 22. "Gainful employment" means the capacity to perform 18 employment for wages for a period of time that is not part-time, 19 occasional or sporadic;

20 23. "Impaired self-insurer" means a private self-insurer or 21 group self-insurance association that fails to pay its workers' 22 compensation obligations, or is financially unable to do so and is 23 the subject of any proceeding under the Federal Bankruptcy Reform 24 Act of 1978, and any subsequent amendments or is the subject of any

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¹ proceeding in which a receiver, custodian, liquidator,
² rehabilitator, trustee or similar officer has been appointed by a
³ court of competent jurisdiction to act in lieu of or on behalf of
⁴ the self-insurer;

5 24. "Incapacity" means inadequate strength or ability to 6 perform a work-related task;

7 25. "Insurance Commissioner" means the Insurance Commissioner 8 of the State of Oklahoma this state;

9 26. "Insurance Department" means the Insurance Department of 10 the State of Oklahoma this state;

11 "Major cause" means more than fifty percent (50%) of the 27. 12 resulting injury, disease or illness. A finding of major cause 13 shall be established by a preponderance of the evidence. A finding 14 that the workplace was not a major cause of the injury, disease or 15 illness shall not adversely affect the exclusive remedy provisions 16 of this act the Administrative Workers' Compensation Act and shall 17 not create a separate cause of action outside this act the 18 Administrative Workers' Compensation Act;

19 28. "Maximum medical improvement" means that no further 20 material improvement would reasonably be expected from medical 21 treatment or the passage of time;

22 29. "Medical services" means those services specified in 23 Section 50 of this title;

30. "Misconduct" shall include the following:

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1		a.	unexplained absenteeism or tardiness,
2		b.	willful or wanton indifference to or neglect of the
3			duties required,
4		c.	willful or wanton breach of any duty required by the
5			employer,
6		d.	the mismanagement of a position of employment by
7			action or inaction,
8		e.	actions or omissions that place in jeopardy the
9			health, life, or property of self or others,
10		f.	dishonesty,
11		g.	wrongdoing,
12		h.	violation of a law, or
13		i.	a violation of a policy or rule adopted to ensure
14			orderly work or the safety of self or others;
15	31.	a.	(1) "Objective findings" are those findings which
16			cannot come under the voluntary control of the
17			patient.
18			(2) (a) When determining permanent disability, a
19			physician, any other medical provider, an
20			administrative law judge, the Commission or
21			the courts shall not consider complaints of
22			pain.
23			(b) For the purpose of making permanent
24			disability ratings to the spine, physicians

1		shall use criteria established by the Sixth
2		Edition of the American Medical Association
3		"Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent
4		Impairment".
5	(3) (a)	Objective evidence necessary to prove
6		permanent disability in occupational hearing
7		loss cases may be established by medically
8		recognized and accepted clinical diagnostic
9		methodologies, including, but not limited
10		to, audiological tests that measure air and
11		bone conduction thresholds and speech
12		discrimination ability.
13	(b)	Any difference in the baseline hearing
14		levels shall be confirmed by subsequent
15		testing; provided, however, such test shall
16		be given within four (4) weeks of the
17		initial baseline hearing level test but not
18		before five (5) days after being adjusted
19		for presbycusis.
20	b. Medical o	pinions addressing compensability and
21	permanent	disability shall be stated within a
22	reasonable	e degree of medical certainty;
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1 32. "Official Disability Guidelines" or "ODG" means the current 2 edition of the Official Disability Guidelines and the ODG Treatment 3 in Workers' Comp as published by the Work Loss Data Institute;

33. "Permanent disability" means the extent, expressed as a
percentage, of the loss of a portion of the total physiological
capabilities of the human body as established by competent medical
evidence and based on the Sixth Edition of the American Medical
Association "Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment", if
the impairment is contained therein;

10 34. "Permanent partial disability" means a permanent disability 11 or loss of use after maximum medical improvement has been reached 12 which prevents the injured employee, who has been released to return 13 to work by the treating physician, from returning to his or her pre-14 injury or equivalent job. All evaluations of permanent partial 15 disability must be supported by objective findings;

16 35. "Permanent total disability" means, based on objective 17 findings, incapacity, based upon accidental injury or occupational 18 disease, to earn wages in any employment for which the employee may 19 become physically suited and reasonably fitted by education, 20 training, experience or vocational rehabilitation provided under 21 this act the Administrative Workers' Compensation Act. Loss of both 22 hands, both feet, both legs, or both eyes, or any two thereof, shall 23 constitute permanent total disability;

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36. "Preexisting condition" means any illness, injury, disease, or other physical or mental condition, whether or not work-related, for which medical advice, diagnosis, care or treatment was recommended or received preceding the date of injury;

⁵ 37. "Pre-injury or equivalent job" means the job that the claimant was working for the employer at the time the injury occurred or any other employment offered by the claimant's employer that pays at least one hundred percent (100%) of the employee's average weekly wage;

10 38. "Private self-insurer" means a private employer that has 11 been authorized to self-insure its workers' compensation obligations 12 pursuant to this act the Administrative Workers' Compensation Act, 13 but does not include group self-insurance associations authorized by 14 this act the Administrative Workers' Compensation Act, or any public 15 employer that self-insures pursuant to this act the Administrative 16 Workers' Compensation Act;

¹⁷ 39. "Prosthetic" means an artificial device used to replace a ¹⁸ part or joint of the body that is lost or injured in an accident or ¹⁹ illness covered by this act the Administrative Workers' Compensation ²⁰ Act;

40. "Scheduled member" or "member" means hands, fingers, arms, legs, feet, toes, and eyes. In addition, for purposes of the Multiple Injury Trust Fund only, "scheduled member" scheduled member means hearing impairment;

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41. "Scientifically based" involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to medical testing, diagnoses and treatment; is adequate to justify the general conclusions drawn; and has been accepted by a peer-review journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review;

8 42. "State average weekly wage" means the state average weekly 9 wage determined by the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission in 10 the preceding calendar year. If such determination is not 11 available, the Commission shall determine the wage annually after 12 reasonable investigation;

¹³ 43. "Subcontractor" means a person, firm, corporation or other ¹⁴ legal entity hired by the general or prime contractor to perform a ¹⁵ specific task for the completion of a work-related activity;

¹⁶ 44. "Surgery" does not include an injection, or the forcing of ¹⁷ fluids beneath the skin, for treatment or diagnosis;

18 45. "Surviving spouse" means the employee's spouse by reason of 19 a legal marriage recognized by the State of Oklahoma this state or 20 under the requirements of a common law marriage in this state, as 21 determined by the Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission;

46. "Temporary partial disability" means an injured employee
who is temporarily unable to perform his or her job, but may perform
alternative work offered by the employer;

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1	47. "Time of accident" or "date of accident" means the time or
2	date of the occurrence of the accidental incident from which
3	compensable injury, disability, or death results; and
4	48. "Wages" means money compensation received for employment at
5	the time of the accident, including the reasonable value of board,
6	rent, housing, lodging, or similar advantage received from the
7	employer and includes the amount of tips required to be reported by
8	the employer under Section 6053 of the Internal Revenue Code and the
9	regulations promulgated pursuant thereto or the amount of actual
10	tips reported, whichever amount is greater.
11	SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2025.
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