

## **Florida Launches AOB Resource, Education Webpage for Consumers**

The Florida Office of Insurance Regulation (OIR) has launched a new webpage as part of its efforts to educate Florida consumers about the state's ongoing challenges with assignment of benefits (AOB) abuse. The AOB resource webpage has been added to the OIR website and offers information about what an AOB is – a document signed by a policyholder that allows a third party, such as a water extraction company, a roofer, or a plumber, to “stand in the shoes” of the insured and seek direct payment from the insurance company. The site also includes information for Florida's consumers about changes needed to discourage fraudulent AOB activity.

AOB's have become prevalent in water and roof claims across the state, and because of loopholes in the way it is being used in the marketplace costs for homeowners are going up from unnecessary litigation associated with certain AOB claims, OIR advises.

The page also provides information on what consumers should expect in terms of rate increases because of the abuse.

“The new webpage provides a sobering projection of insurance rate increases homeowners can expect to see in the next five years without any legislative reform,” said a statement from OIR.

The site includes various presentations, video links, and news articles related to the AOB abuse.

“This issue is a primary legislative priority of [OIR] and our number one objective has been, and will continue to be, holding consumers harmless. [OIR] is supportive of legislation addressing attorneys' fees and providing for additional protections for consumers,” the page advises consumers, with a link for visitors to follow if they wish to get involved or contact their legislative representative.

OIR has primary responsibility for regulation, compliance and enforcement of statutes related to the business of insurance and the monitoring of industry markets.

*Source: Florida Office of Insurance Regulation*