



# Press Release

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## National Industry Issues Forum Allows Repairers to Discuss Key Issues

*Prosser, Washington, April 28, 2005* —Insurer intervention into shop management and concerns related to the estimating databases topped the list of issues foremost on the minds of collision repair shop owners at a national Society of Collision Repair Specialists (SCRS) event in mid-April.

The National Industry Issues Forum (NIIF), sponsored annually by SCRS, was held in Charlotte, North Carolina prior to the Collision Industry Conference (CIC).

“The meeting is designed to allow shop owners, association leaders and other SCRS members to have a forum to openly discuss their concerns,” said Chad Sulkala, SCRS Treasurer who co-moderated the NIIF discussion. “The goal is to determine which issues are the most pressing, discuss possible solutions and determine what SCRS and other industry organizations can do to move toward resolutions.”

Attendees compiled a list of about twelve key issues and concerns, ranging from the shrinking repair market to the use of non-deployed OE airbags and the rising cost of health insurance.

“We then looked at the list and narrowed the discussion down to two issues that seemed to incorporate several of the issues raised,” said Gary Wano Jr., SCRS Vice Chairman who co-moderated the NIIF.

The first of those issues was insurer intervention into shop management, including:

- Varied and frequently-changing direct repair program requirements, including the mandatory use of a particular customer satisfaction indexing (CSI) provider.
- The continued shift of administrative duties and costs to shops.
- The increasing percentage of vehicles being declared total losses.

The second set of issues discussed in-depth was concerns about the estimating databases. In particular, Wano said, “Participants at the forum were concerned about the independence of the information providers, and whether or not they could be influenced to make changes to their database. They cited the problem last fall when one of the information providers reduced their paint labor times on over 150 vehicle files and to another provider that recently added a feature that allows an insurer to reduce paint labor time on repaired panels by applying a percentage.” Sulkala continued, “These types of changes raise issues in the minds of repairers about whether changes to the databases are being influenced by outside pressure.”

Sulkala explained that some of the information discussed at the forum would be presented to the recently created CIC Database Task Force that is addressing similar issues with the information providers. The remaining issues will be discussed at length during the next SCRS Board of Directors meeting, and a decision will be made as to whether or not they are added to our list of objectives for the year. The remaining issues will be presented to the appropriate CIC Committees. In some instances, there may not be a solution readily available, and the best course of action would be for one of the CIC Committees to conduct additional research and possibly do a presentation on the topic. In doing so, a solution may evolve or the awareness surrounding the topic is elevated where as the group or groups perpetuating the issue seeks a way to minimize or eliminate the issue altogether.

“We sincerely appreciate the shop owners and SCRS members who came to Charlotte to participate in the National Industry Issues Forum,” stated Sulkala “This annual event helps ensure we stay on top of the key issues impacting our members and maintain our motto of, ‘Working Together Is The Most Important Work We Do’.”

Through its direct members and 29 affiliate associations, SCRS is comprised of 5,000 collision repair businesses and 58,500 specialized professionals who work with consumers and insurance companies to repair collision-damaged vehicles. Additional information about SCRS including news releases is available at the SCRS web site: [www.scrs.com](http://www.scrs.com). You can e-mail SCRS at the following address: [scrs1@aol.com](mailto:scrs1@aol.com).

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