

IME Business & Labor Advisory Team Virtual Meeting

April 4, 2023



Announcements

Zoom Meeting Reminders:

- Mute when not speaking to limit background noise
- Raise hand or use chat feature
- Opt out of video if having connection issues
- Meeting Minutes will be posted on L&I Webpage

4/4/23 Business & Labor IME Meeting

Time	Topic	Presenters
9:30AM	Welcome/Announcements Safety Tip	Troy Parks Melissa Dunbar
9:40AM	Program Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">IME Telemedicine Rule (WAC) PromulgationIME Firm Site Visits	Kristen Baldwin-Boe Troy Parks
10:00AM	What Does a Quality IME Look Like? – Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Current quality oversight summaryGap analysis & opportunitiesFeedback from B&L partners	Troy Parks Tanya Weber, RN Dr. Azadeh Farokhi
10:45AM	Claims Processing Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">SF/SI data match reportProtest dataSHB1068 update	Nancy Adams
10:55AM	Scheduling Unit Trends	Shannon Estrada/Gary Kolanja
11:00AM	Self-Insured Program Updates-Protest Trends	LaNae Lien
11:05-11:30AM	Q&A-Open discussion Round Robin	All



Safety Tips: Melissa Dunbar

Practice ladder safety

- When cleaning gutters, high windows, ceiling fans and other areas that require a ladder, always wear non-skid shoes and ensure that the ladder is stabilized on level ground. You should ideally have a partner hold the ladder for you, but if you must use a ladder alone, always let someone know first.

Read all cleaning product safety labels

- Safety warnings about ventilation, burns and other chemical hazards are vitally important. For example, mixing bleach and ammonia creates a potentially fatal toxic gas.

Keep pets and children safe

- Make sure your cleaning solutions, trash bags and other supplies are kept out of their reach.

Lift with the knees

- When moving furniture and other large objects, practice proper lifting posture and consider wearing a back brace for additional support.

Wear a dust mask and eye protection

- When you're cleaning out especially dusty or dirty areas, a simple disposable dust mask and pair of goggles can spare you some irritation.

IME Program Updates

Kristen Baldwin-Boe
Troy Parks

IME Telemedicine WAC

- IME Telemedicine Rule & How to Accommodate the Worker When No IME Specialty is Available Near the Worker
 - Met with Business, Labor, & IME Reps – February 3
 - CR102 file – April 18
 - Hearing – May 24th 10:00 a.m.
 - Written Comments by May 24th at 5:00 p.m.
 - Adopt August 1st

IME Firm Engagement – Troy Parks

- Customer Focus is an L&I Core Value and we strive to “*make it easy to do business and engage with L&I*”
- Through these onsite engagements we hope to learn more about the areas of operational burden that IME firms have expressed during recent department hosted IME program meetings. We hope to delve deeper into these issues in hopes of identifying the root causes, all in an effort to help inform any future mitigation efforts
- 1/26/23 Visit MCN Wenatchee-Completed
- 4/13/23 Visit MES Olympia-Scheduled



Scope of Engagement

- L&I staff will observe IME firm processes and ask prepared questions in an effort to solicit invaluable input from firms, from their perspective, on the six areas of operational burden identified by firms.
- It is believed that through this dialogue, L&I will gain a better understanding of our IME firm customers concerns.

6 Areas of Focus:

- *Exam Scheduling and Preparation*
- *Scheduling of Interpreter Services*
- *Collating and Review of Medical Records*
- *Follow Up Diagnostics*
- *Quality Assurance*
- *Staffing*

Questions?



IME Program: Current State and Quality Assurance Opportunities

- Current & Past Quality Metrics and controls
- Gap Analysis
- Enhancement Opportunities
- Feedback: *What would you like to see as indicators?*



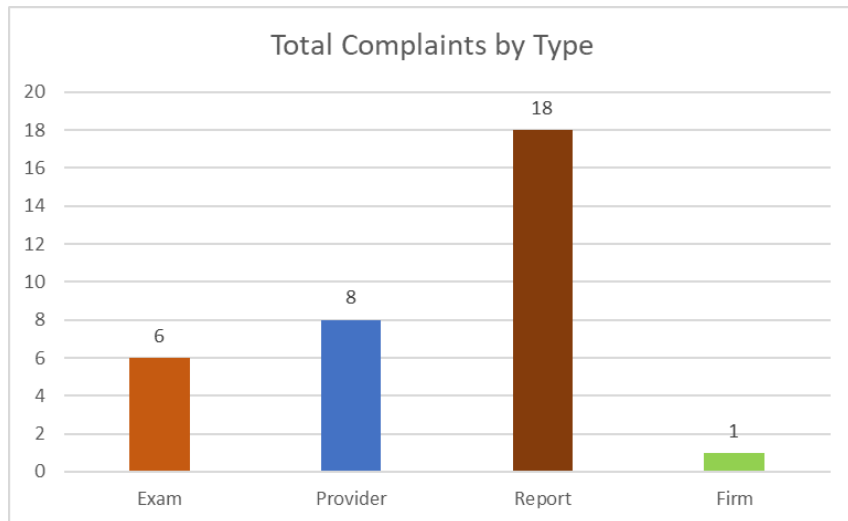
Current Landscape

Specialty	#
Allergy	1
Anesthesiology	1
Chiropractic	37
Dentistry	5
Dermatology	1
Endocrinology	1
Family Practice	2
Gastroenterology	1
General Surgery	3
Hand Surgery / Surgery Of The Hand	30
Internal Medicine	10
Neurological Surgery	5
Neurology	41
Obstetrics And Gynecology	2
Occupational Medicine	11
Ophthalmology	2
Orthopedic Surgery	114
Otolaryngology	10
Physical Medicine And Rehabilitation	18
Podiatry	10
Psychiatry	31
Urology	4
Vascular Surgery	2
Total Examiners:	342

- Associated with 8 IME Firms
- 1,142 SF/SI exams on average, per month SFY2022
- Top exam specialties:

ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY	10270
NEUROLOGY	3274
PSYCHIATRY	1220
CHIRO CONSULTANT	780
OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE	703
PLASTIC SURGERY	268
PHYSICAL MEDICINE/REHAB	263
OTOLOGY-LARYNGOLOGY-RHINOLOGY	251
PODIATRY	174

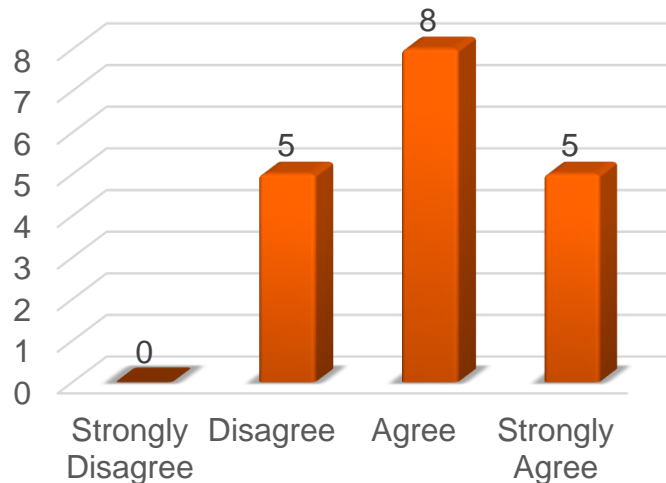
2023 IME Complaints-First Qtr



- 33 Complaints
- Top Specialties:
 - Orthopedic Surgeon
 - Neurology

IME Examiner Exit Survey (1st Qtr. 2023)

- 2 responses
- 72% responses to 9 questions on Likert scale were affirmative
- Reason for disagreeing: contractual concerns w/ firm, collating of records, travel accommodations
- Reason for leaving: both due to having to maintain board certification
- No difference between SF/SI



IME Examiner Retention Survey (1st Qtr. 2023):

3 responses (Scale 1-10; Average 6)

Ways to improve Score?

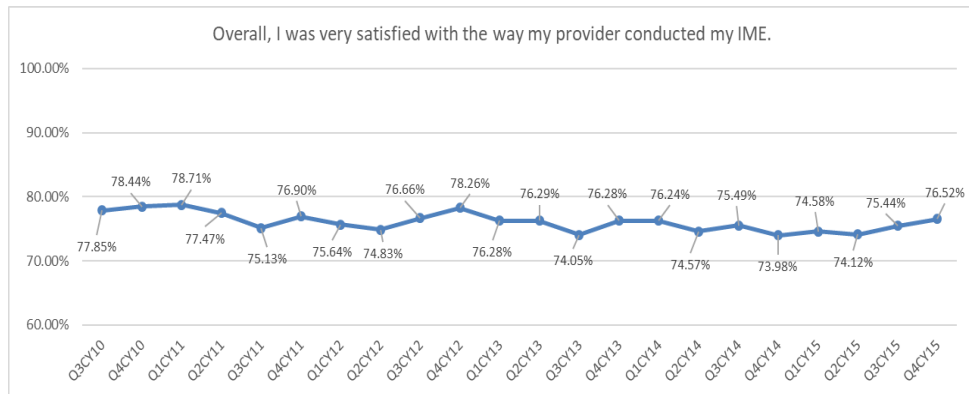
- Better adjudication of worker conditions
- Accept examiner MMI determinations
- Higher reimbursement for large files, market equity with other states

Ways L&I could improve IME process?

- Make record review easier...purge records that are old/not relevant i.e. >5 yrs old, etc.
- Keep special interests out of decision making and policy
- Self insured requests should contain accepted condition

Worker IME Exit Survey: March 2010-2015

- Direct mailings started July 2011 improving response rate
- Overall worker satisfaction:
Median 76%
- Two questions with highest correlation to overall satisfaction:
 - Doctor took enough time to be thorough and complete?
 - Examiner familiar with medical hx
- Mailings were cumbersome results hard to collate
- Lack of useful trend data
- Response rate does not appear to be calculated. CY 2,485 responses.



Worker Exit Survey Tool...



Independent Medical Exam (IME) Injured Worker Survey

Your Independent Medical Examination (IME) experience is important to us. Your feedback will help us improve our program. **Please complete this survey within 5 days of your IME.** Your response is entirely anonymous.

Please use a black ballpoint pen to complete the survey. Please return your survey in the pre-paid envelope.

Please indicate "yes" or "no" for the following statements by completely filling in ONLY one bubble per question:	Yes	No	I don't recall
1. I received the brochure called "Your Independent Medical Exam".	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. The exam location was easy to find.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. The doctor(s) discussed my medical history with me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. A physical exam of my injury/illness was performed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. The doctor(s) introduced themselves to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. The exam setting was private.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. The doctor(s) referred to me by name.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I was told when the exam was over.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How long did you wait to be seen beyond your scheduled appointment time?

15 minutes or less <input type="radio"/>	16 to 30 minutes <input type="radio"/>	31 to 45 minutes <input type="radio"/>	more than 45 minutes <input type="radio"/>	I don't recall <input type="radio"/>
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How many doctors examined you?

one <input type="radio"/>	two <input type="radio"/>	three <input type="radio"/>	4 or more <input type="radio"/>
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If more than one doctor examined you, did they examine you:

together <input type="radio"/>	separately <input type="radio"/>
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Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your IME experience by completely filling in ONLY one bubble per question:

	agree strongly	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree strongly	don't know
1. The appointment letter clearly explained the purpose of the exam.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. The doctor(s) explained the purpose of the exam to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. The doctor(s) explained their role to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. The doctor(s) treated me with dignity and respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. The doctor(s) were familiar with my medical history.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. The doctor(s) reviewed the accuracy of my medical history with me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. The doctor(s) did their best to minimize any discomfort during the exam.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. The doctor(s) answered my questions and concerns.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. In my opinion, the doctor(s) spent enough time to be thorough and complete.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I found the doctor(s) to be professional.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Overall, I was very satisfied with the way the doctor(s) conducted my exam.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The medical history review lasted approximately _____ minutes. The physical exam lasted approximately _____ minutes.

What additional comments do you have about your IME experience?

If you would like additional information about your claim, please contact your claim manager or self-insurance representative.

If you would like a copy of your IME report, please submit your request in writing to your claim manager or self-insurance representative.

Thank you for your participation!

June 2011

Continued on Back

Exit Survey Revamp 2023

- Opportunity to automate process using agency approved online survey tool e.g. Opinio, Survey Monkey?
- Review prior questions; opportunity to ask more objective and pointed questions to measure quality?
- Ensure feedback loop to inform IME policy, operations, address service gaps and help facilitate firm engagement
- Best practices, recommendations?



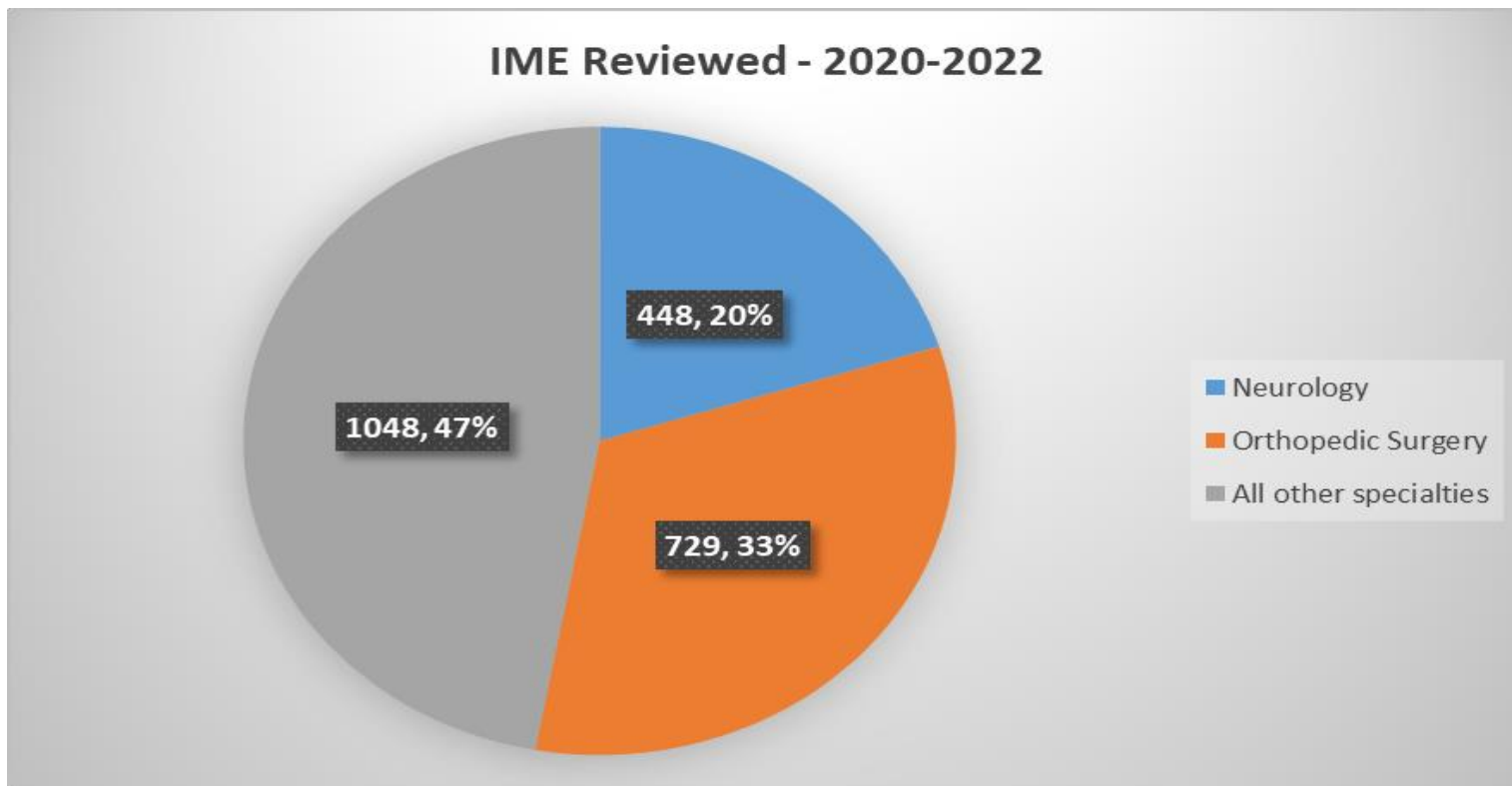
IME Clinical Quality Assurance Efforts:

- IME quality reviews by Occupational Nurse Consultant
 - There were 887 IME quality reviews completed in 2022
 - Focus on new examiners and those re-credentialed
 - Determine % of non billable addendum requests (<1% for 2022)
- Telemedicine visits since March 2020 have been reviewed to help inform Telemedicine rule and department policy
- Review of impairment ratings

IME Quality Review Impairment Ratings

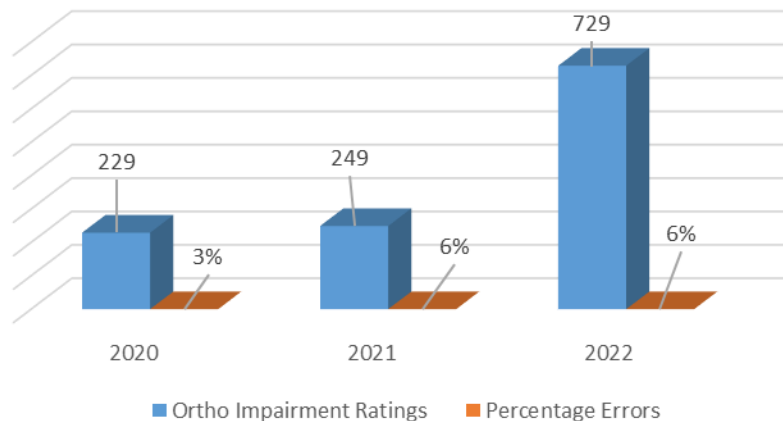
Tanya Weber, BSN, RN
IME Occupational Nurse Consultant

IME Reports Reviewed 2020-2022

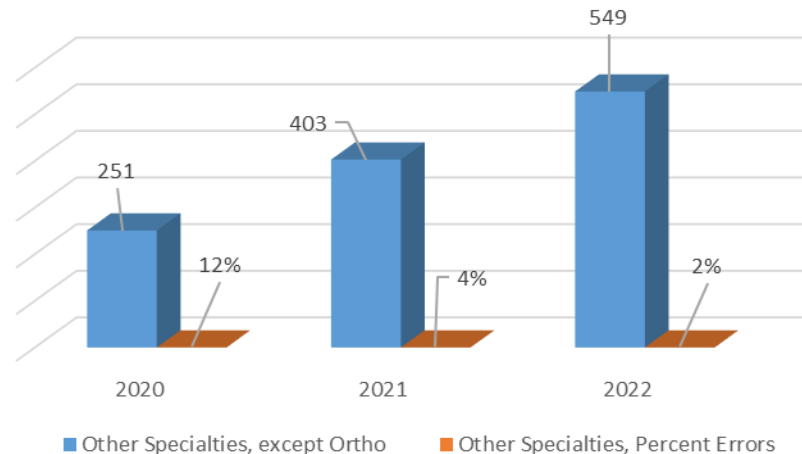


Impairment Rating Results of sample reviewed

Orthopedic Specialty
Impairment Rating Reports with Errors



Other Specialties except Ortho
Impairment Rating Reports with Errors



Data Findings & Expected Outcome

- The data tells us we need to provide additional IR resources/education for all IME examiners
- It also tells us orthopedists need additional support/guidance to assist them when determining IRs that many times include complex calculations
- The expected outcome is a decrease in IR errors

Quality Assurance Opportunities

- Gaps identified:
 - Need for more Resources & education for examiners
 - Lack of guidance on PTSD diagnoses and Dental claims
 - Peer review
 - How to address examiner behavioral complaints
 - Impairment rating consistency



Additional Gaps..

- Lack of spinal impairment WAC
- Address bias in reports (lack of objectivity)
- Need for focused trainings by specialty
- No financial incentive for quality exams

Potential Quality Indicators (Metrics)

- Outcome Based Measures:
 - BIIA appeal success rate
 - Trend type analysis (claim type e.g. PTSD, dental)
 - Length of claim
 - AP linkage

Process Measures

- Report submittal turnaround
- # addendums associated with exams (reduction; 10% or less currently)
- # diagnostics (reduction would indicate better claims mgmt. and prep by examiner)

Next Steps..

- Gain insight from internal and external customers
- Prioritize gaps
- Develop work plan to address priority “gaps” and improvement opportunities

Your Input is Valuable & Vital

- *What quality data would be meaningful for B&L participants? We really want to know!*
- Please email ideas to Tanya.Weber@lni.wa.gov.



Questions?



Claims Department Updates – Nancy Adams

- Status of the IME SF/SI Data Match Report
- IME Protest Data
- SHB 1068 update

Questions?



IME Scheduling Trends

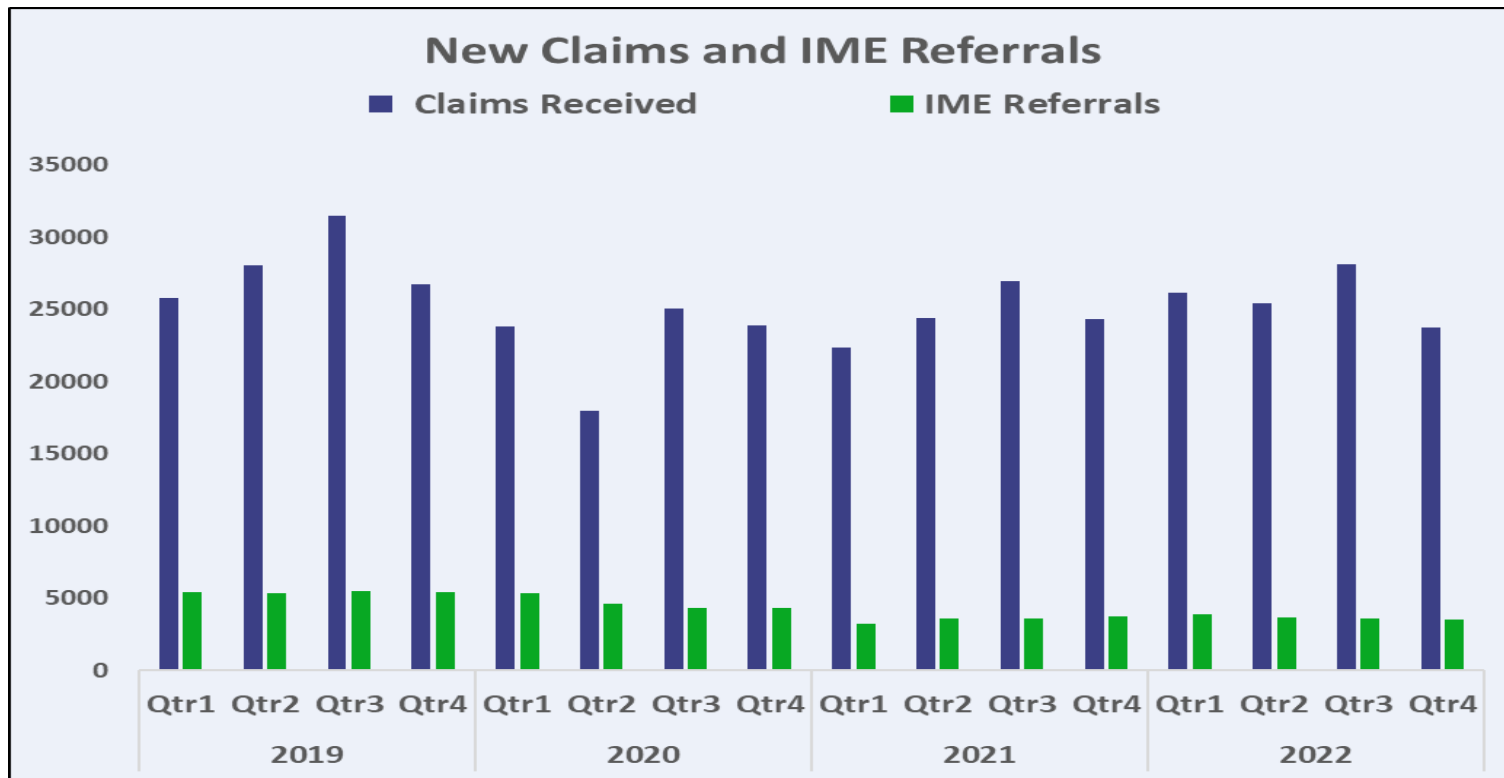
Shannon Estrada

New Claims and IME referrals

- The claim totals are based on claim filing dates
- The referrals totals are based on the date a referral is submitted for scheduling

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
IME Reschedule Rates	20%	22%	24%	25%	25%	37%	28%	28%

Year/Qtr	Claims Received	IME Referrals
2019		
Qtr1	25762	5407
Qtr2	28086	5392
Qtr3	31465	5493
Qtr4	26754	5439
2020		
Qtr1	23824	5375
Qtr2	17968	4629
Qtr3	25036	4352
Qtr4	23885	4326
2021		
Qtr1	22340	3277
Qtr2	24398	3599
Qtr3	26984	3623
Qtr4	24309	3739
2022		
Qtr1	26172	3878
Qtr2	25417	3684
Qtr3	28147	3626
Qtr4	23772	3527



Questions?

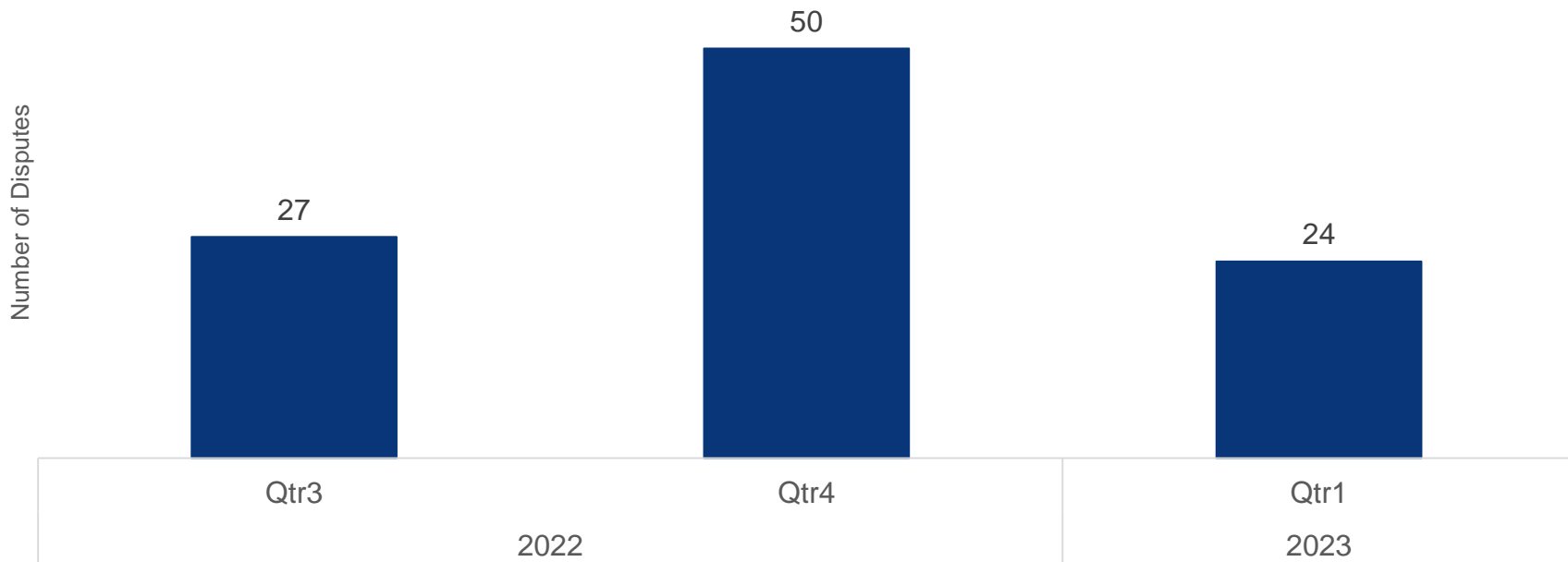


Self Insurance

LaNae Lien

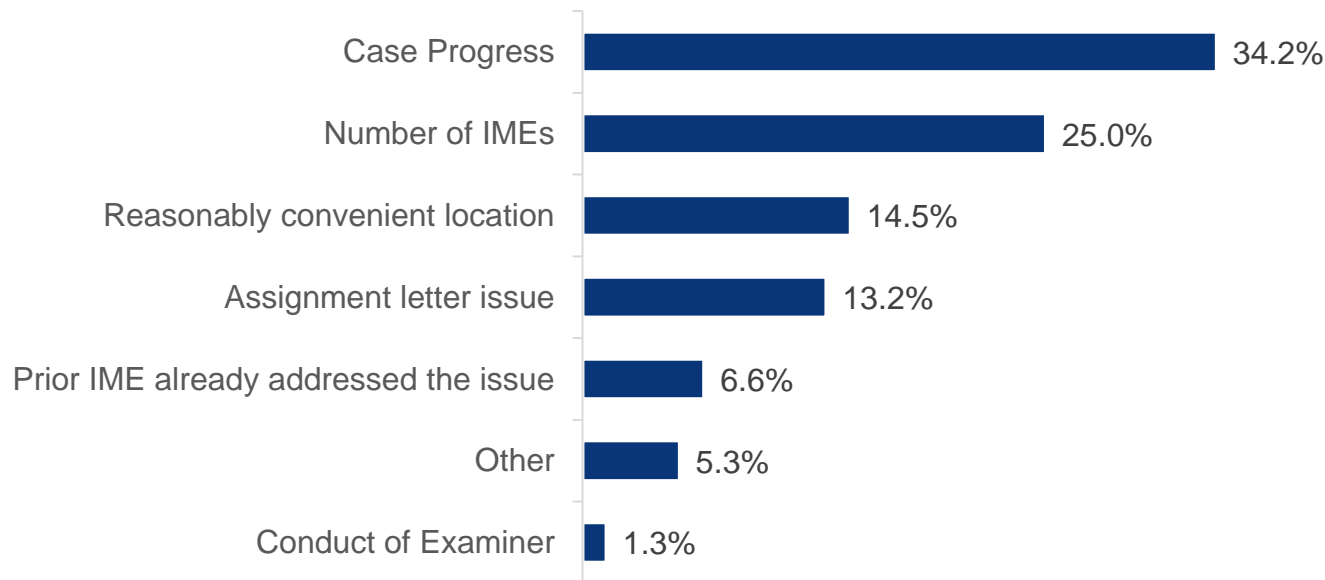
Self-Insurance (SI) IME Disputes Received

August 2022 to Present



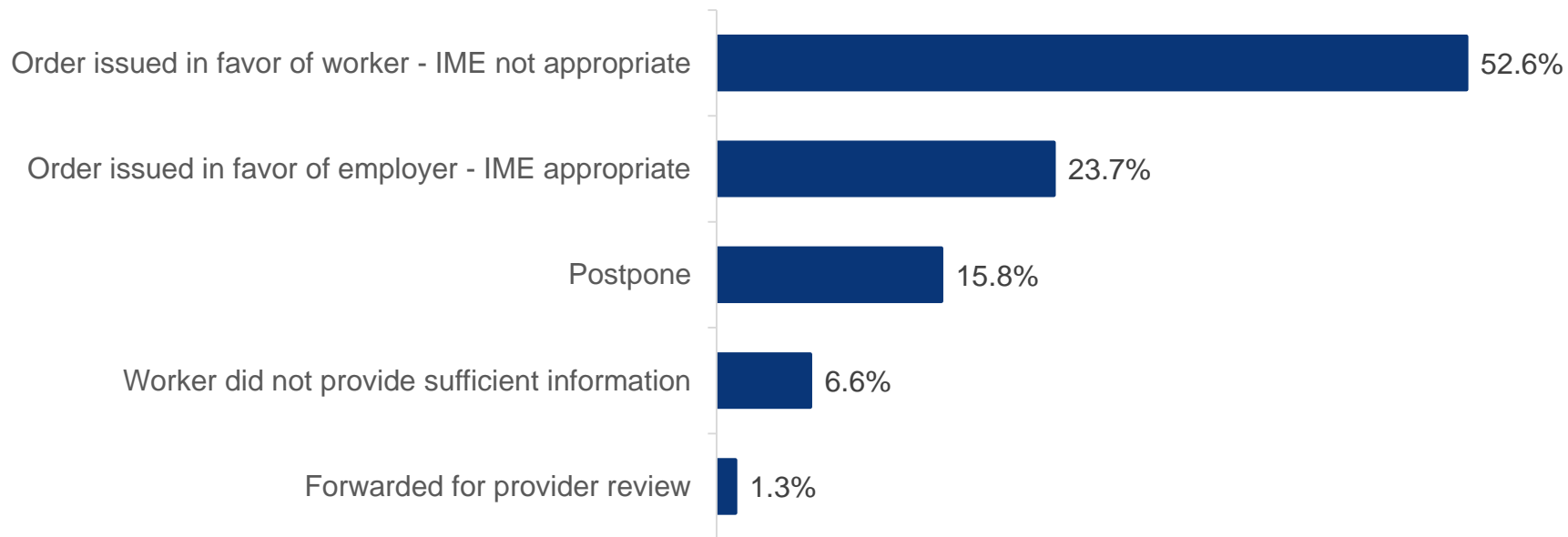
SI IME Disputes Complaint Reasons

SI IME Dispute Complaint Reasons
August 2022 to Present



SI IME Disputes Outcomes

SI IME Dispute Outcomes
August 2022 to Present



Questions?



Open Discussion

- Questions & Comments
- Future Topic Suggestions
- Public Comments
- Next Meetings
 - ***August 10, 2023***
 - ***December 5, 2023***