

IME Business & Labor Advisory Team Virtual Meeting

August 12, 2025



Announcements & Introductions – Troy Parks

Online 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

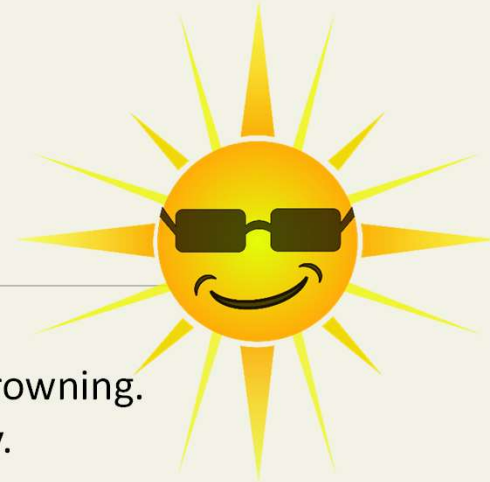
New Staff:

- Stephanie Scheurich

08/12/2025 Business & Labor IME Meeting Agenda

Time	Topic	Presenters
9:30AM	Roll Call/Introductions, Announcements, Safety Message	Troy Parks Melissa Dunbar
9:40AM	Program Updates: • Examiner Survey Stats CY2025 • Examiner Pool Update • Complaints • Interpreter Services	Troy Parks Cristy Miller
10:00AM	IME Complaint Process	Cicely Hartwick
10:30AM	IME Recording Implementation: • Third party recording Pilot • Utilization Data	Troy Parks
10:45AM	IME Data Report	Troy Parks/Nancy Adams
11:00AM	Updates: • Claims • Scheduling Trends • Self-Insurance	Nancy Adams Shannon Rushing LaNae Lien
11:15-11:30AM	Q&A-Open discussion Round Robin • Questions and Comments • Future Topic Suggestions • Public Comments	All

Safety Topic: Summer Safety



- Water –
 - Cold water can cause hypothermia or shock which can lead to accidental drowning.
 - If boating, make sure to wear a life vest regardless of your swimming ability.
- Food –
 - Follow basic food safety practices to prevent foodborne illness like salmonella or listeria.
 - Always wash your hands with soap and water before cooking and serving.
- Heat –
 - Extreme heat can lead to dehydration, exhaustion, injury, and death.
 - Wear loose, breathable clothing, drink plenty of water, stay in the shade, and use sunscreen.
- Pests –
 - To prevent mosquitos and ticks wear long sleeve shirts and pants when in wetlands or woods, and use insect repellent.

IME Program Updates

Retention Survey (4 responses YTD 2025)

"On a scale of 1-10, with 10 representing the most satisfied, how satisfied are you conducting IMEs for L&I?"

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Responses
Satisfaction												
Count	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	4
Row %	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	50.0%	



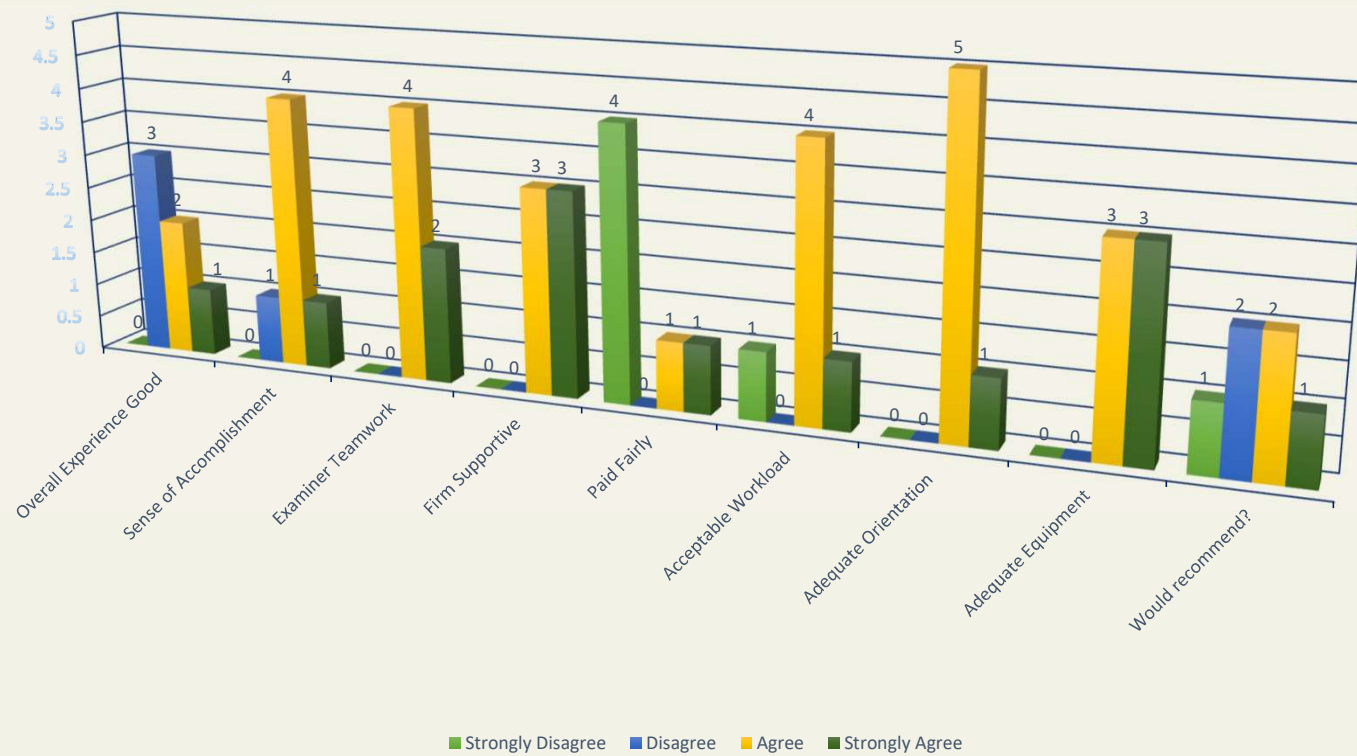
Positive/Neutral Feedback:

- Challenging, often different cases
- I continue to learn by doing them
- Keeps me current. Enjoy forensic work.
- Cooperation amongst peers
- Enjoy doing exams for both SI and SF

Drawbacks:

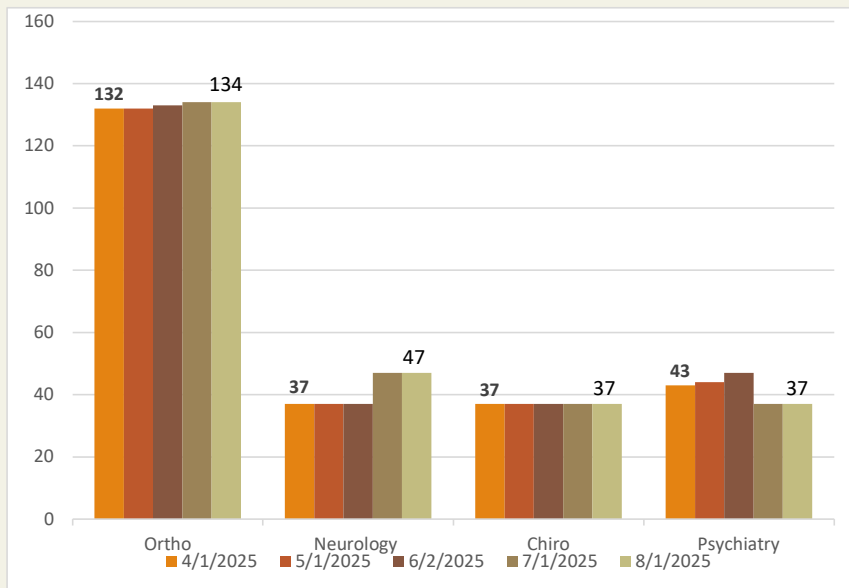
- Reimbursement too low
- Video recordings; lack of protection for examiners around recording misuse
- Too many pages of records to review. Not paid for time reviewed if no show/cancel.

Examiner Exit Survey (6 Responses CY 2025)

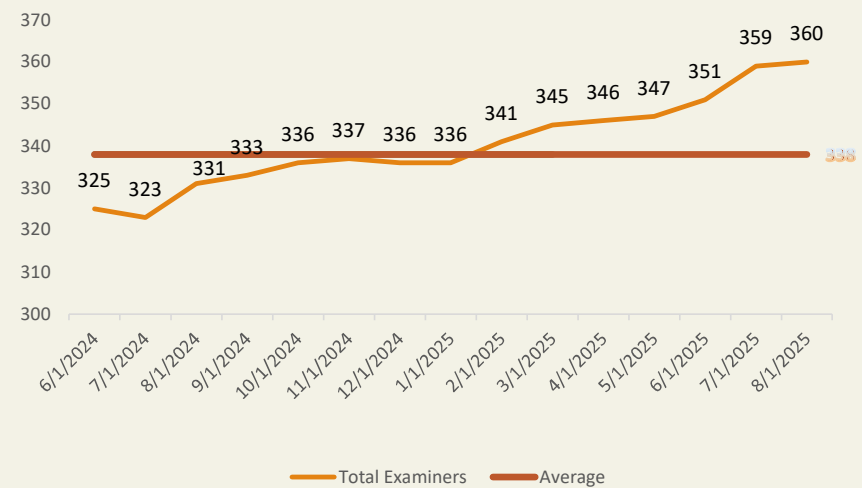


IME Examiner Pool

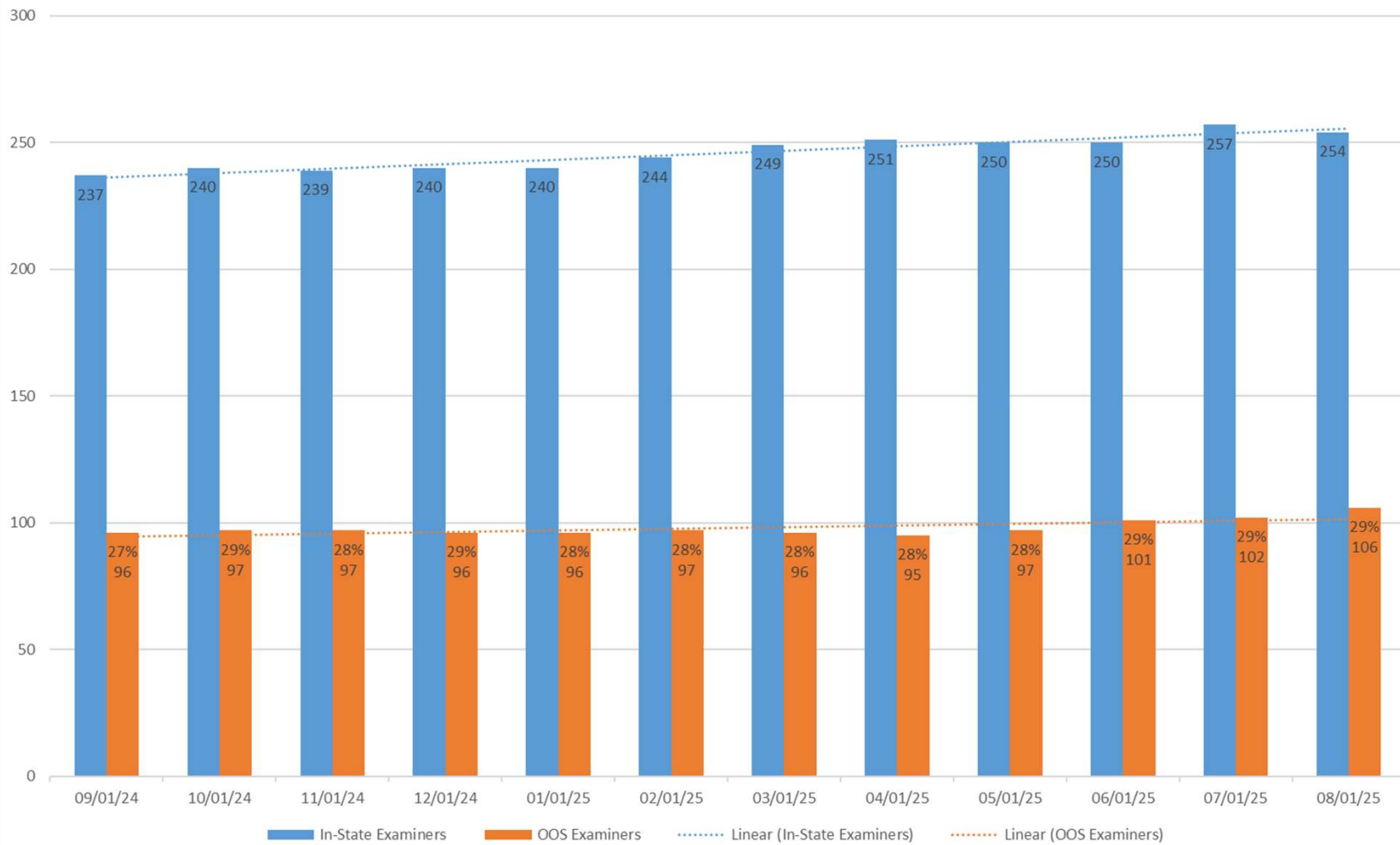
TOP EXAMINER SPECIALTIES



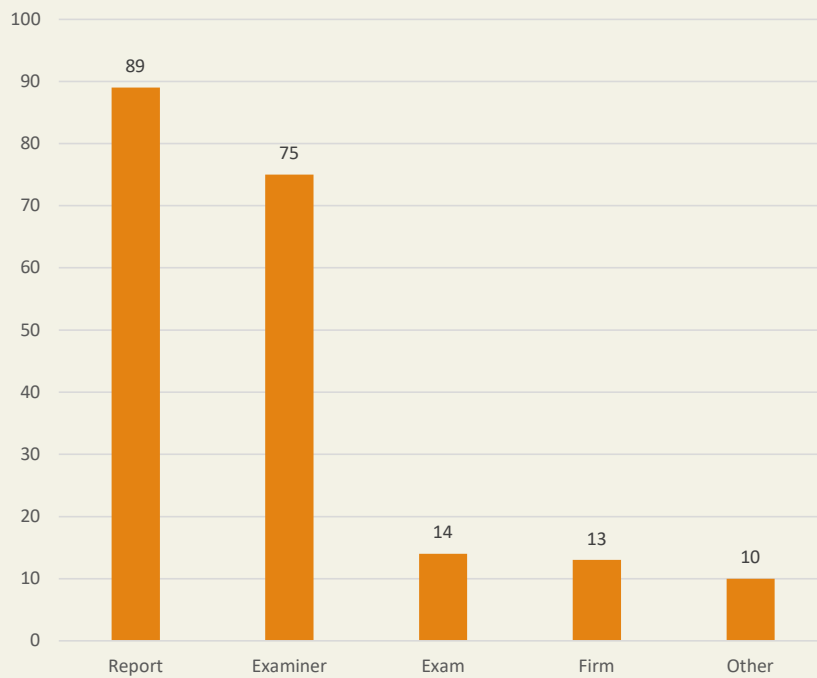
TREND ALL EXAMINERS



In-State vs Out-of-State Examiners



2025 Complaints-YTD



201 Complaints YTD as of 8/11/25

Top Specialties:

- Orthopedic Surgery(82)
- Neurology (37)
- Psychiatry (31)
- Pulmonology (9)
- Occupational Medicine (9)

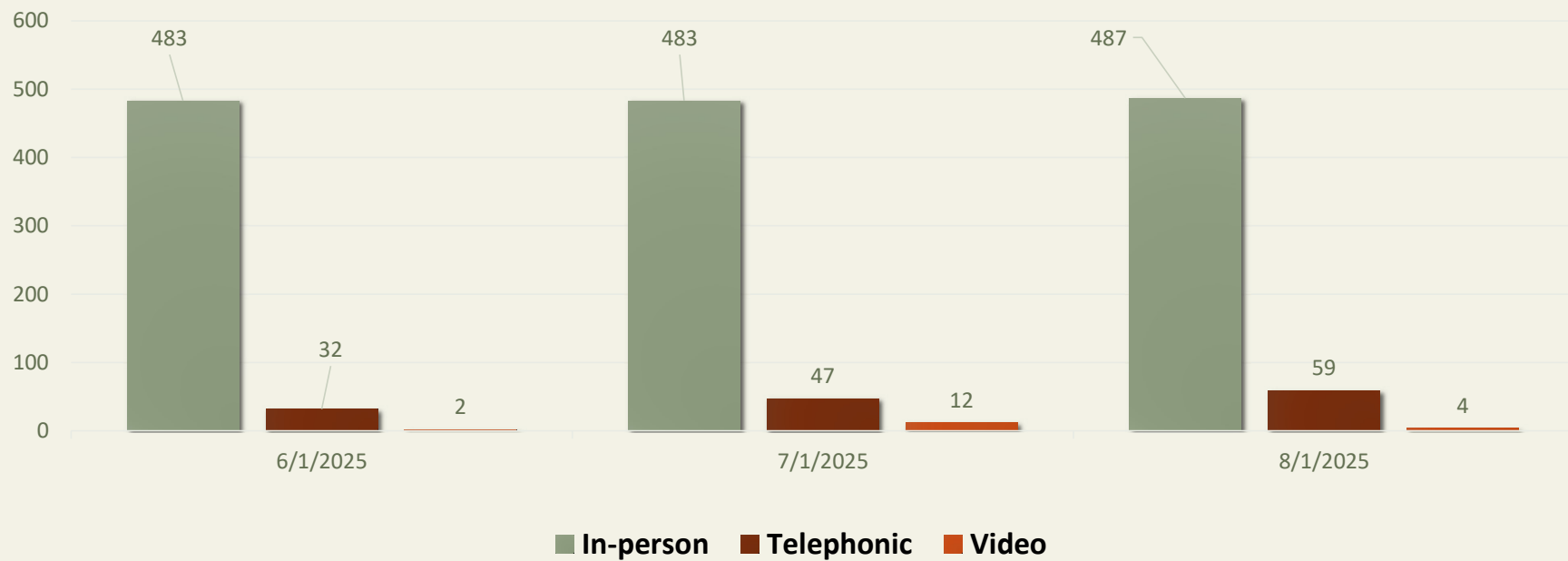
Note: Approx. 12,600 exams in 2024; complaints comprise <1%

Questions?

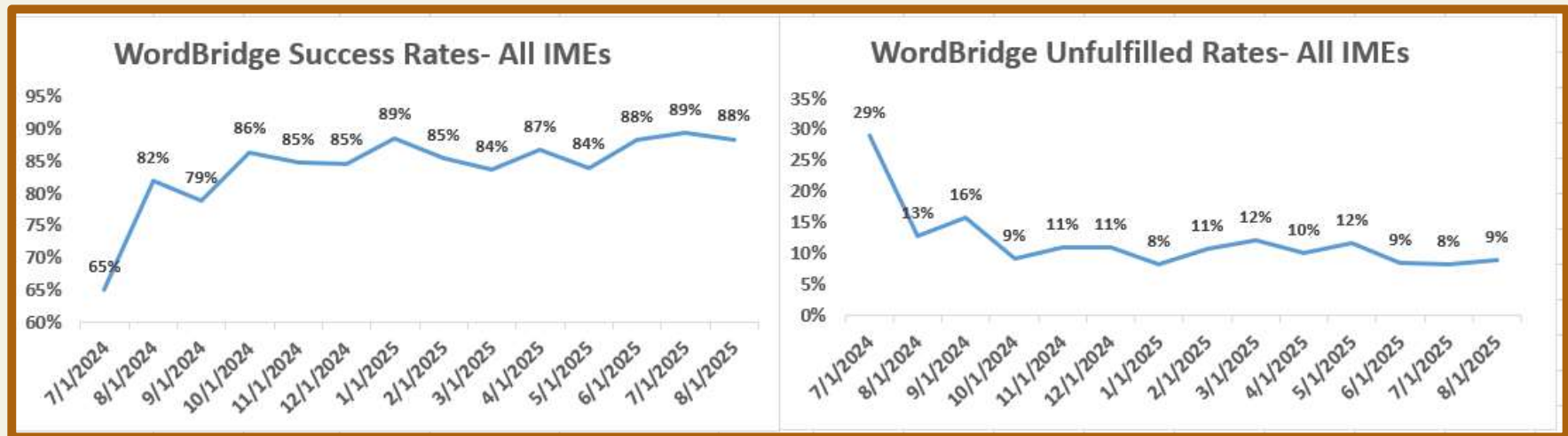


WordBridge Interpretation Services

IME Requests per Interpretation Method



IME Success and Unfulfilled Rates



SOSi LAP Recruitment Efforts

- SOSi has a total of **895** LAPs fully registered in the system. An additional 186 LAPs since May 2025.
- SOSi is closely monitoring the unfulfilled requests and adjusting their recruitment efforts based on the number of requests, language, and location. They reported that there is an urgent need for Cambodian (Snohomish, Pierce, and King counties *53 requests) and Spanish interpreters (Aberdeen and Kelso/Longview) are at the top of the list this month.

City	Language	June RTW	RTW Goal
Seattle	Spanish	15	20
	Vietnamese	2	4
	Swahili	0	2
	Cantonese	3	4
	Amharic	0	2
	Somali	1	2
Renton	Spanish	10	15
	Cambodian	0	2
Kent	Spanish	18	20
	French	0	2
	Dari	2	2
Moses Lake	Spanish	3	12
Wenatchee	Spanish	6	9
Yakima	Spanish	37	45
Tacoma	Spanish	13	18
	Russian	3	4
Puyallup	Spanish	8	9
	Dari	0	1
Covington	Vietnamese	0	2
	Russian	0	2
Federal Way	Spanish	16	19
	Persian	0	2
	Somali	1	2
	Vietnamese	1	2
Everett	French	0	2
	Spanish	19	21
Mount Vernon	Spanish	17	23
Bellingham	Spanish	1	8

*RTW- LAPs ready to work, fully registered

CTS Language Link

SOSi is collaborating with CTS Language Link to ensure that providers can access an interpreter for all appointments or on-demand needs.

1. Backup option for On-Demand Telephonic Services:

If SOSi cannot secure an LAP for on-demand OPI services, SOSi is transferring the requester to CTS Language Link

2. No LAPs registered in the system for a rare language:

If SOSi does not have any LAPs registered to provide services for L&I in the needed language and CTS Language Link has very limited resources, L&I has authorized providers to utilize the pre-scheduled OPI interpreter services through CTS to increase the possibility of an interpreter being available.

Providers are still required to submit all requests for pre-scheduled services on the WordBridge portal. Once SOSi identifies that they do not have any LAPs registered in the needed language, SOSi will coordinate with CTS to preschedule the interpreter services.

Contact Information

Email SOSi: Support@wordbridge.io

Phone: 1-888-224-0126

L&I Interpretation Services: Interpretation@Lni.wa.gov

Questions?



IME Complaint Process

Cicely Hartwick, RN
IME ONC

Complaint Process

IMEComplaints@lni.wa.gov

Accept all complaints related to IMEs

Complaints are triaged and logged in SharePoint site

Data based on logged complaints from Jan-June 2025 (138 total)

Review for Action

Unsubstantiated complaint/track and trend

Communication with IME firm and Provider

Claims Management

Language Services

Scheduling

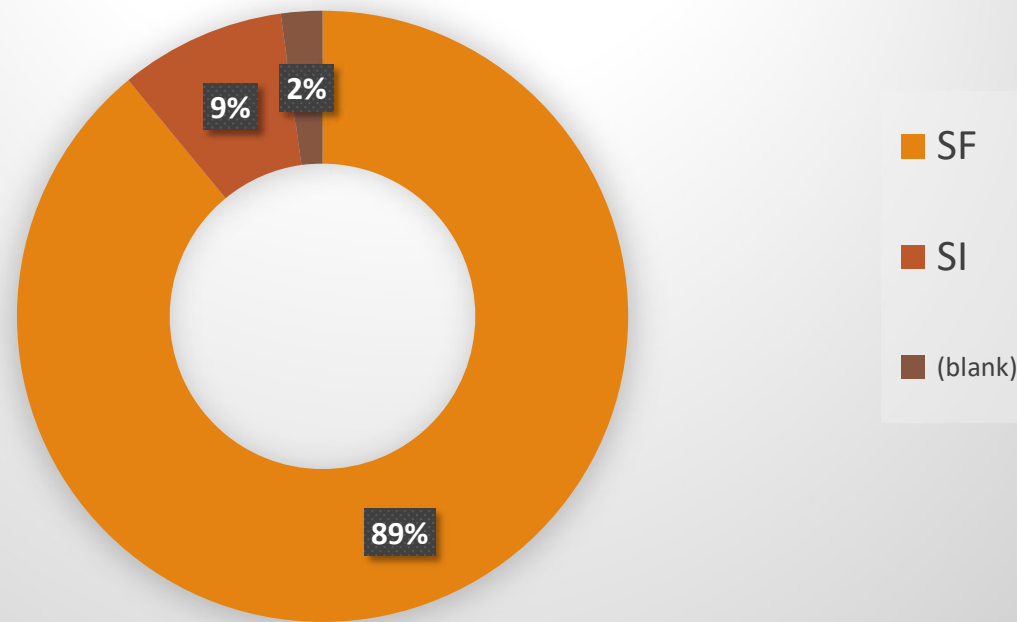
Clinical review (ONC and/or AMD)

Civil Rights Program CivilRights@lni.wa.gov

Review Team

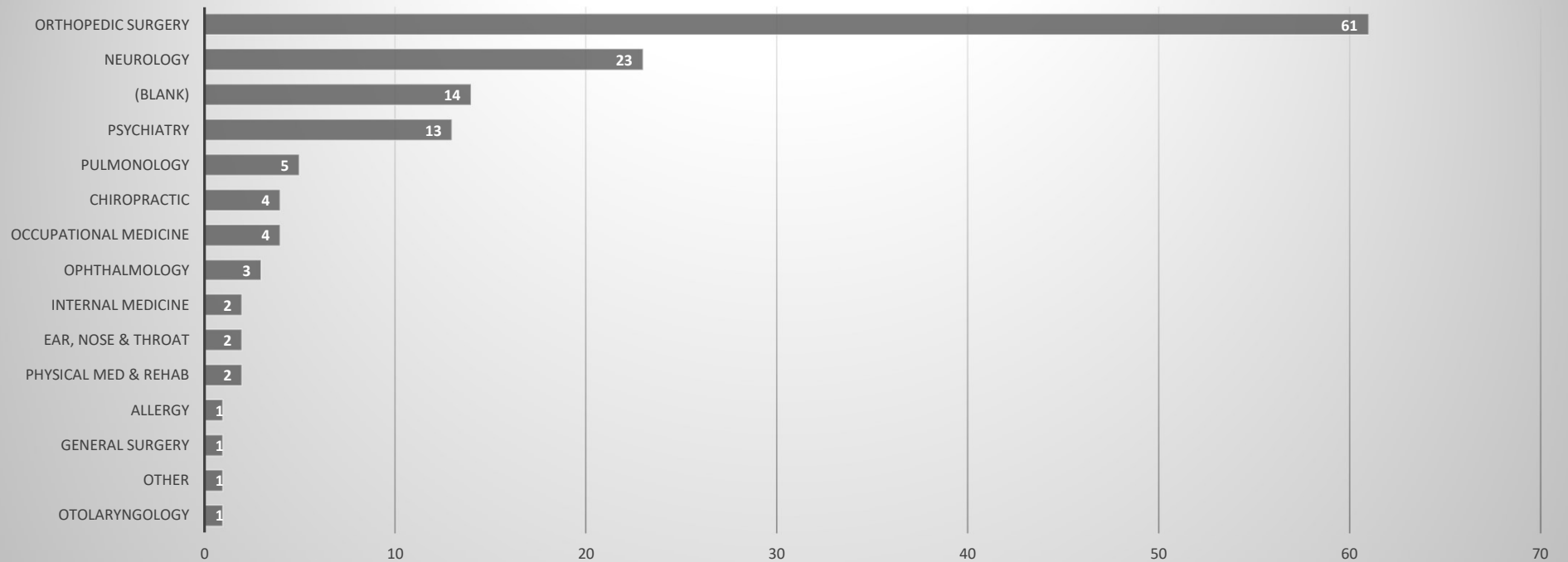
Department of Health

State Fund vs Self Insured

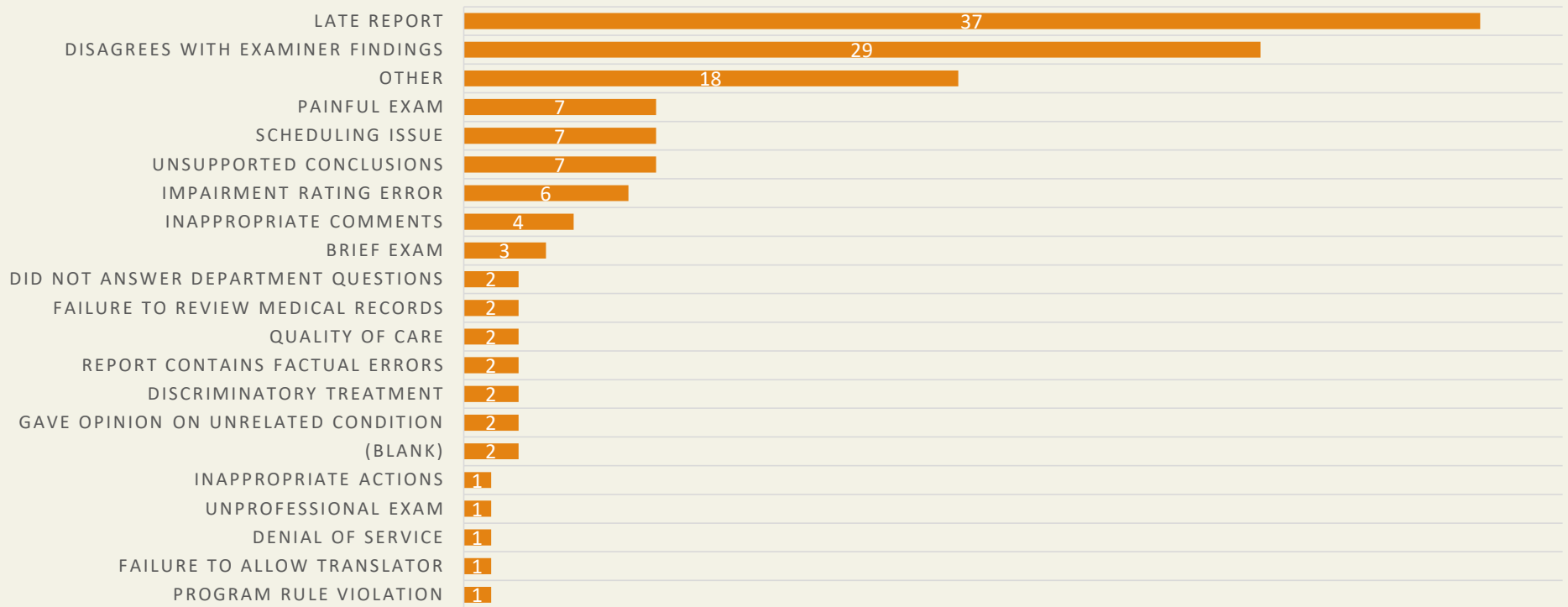


Complaints by Specialty

'Examiner specialty': Orthopedic Surgery appears most often.

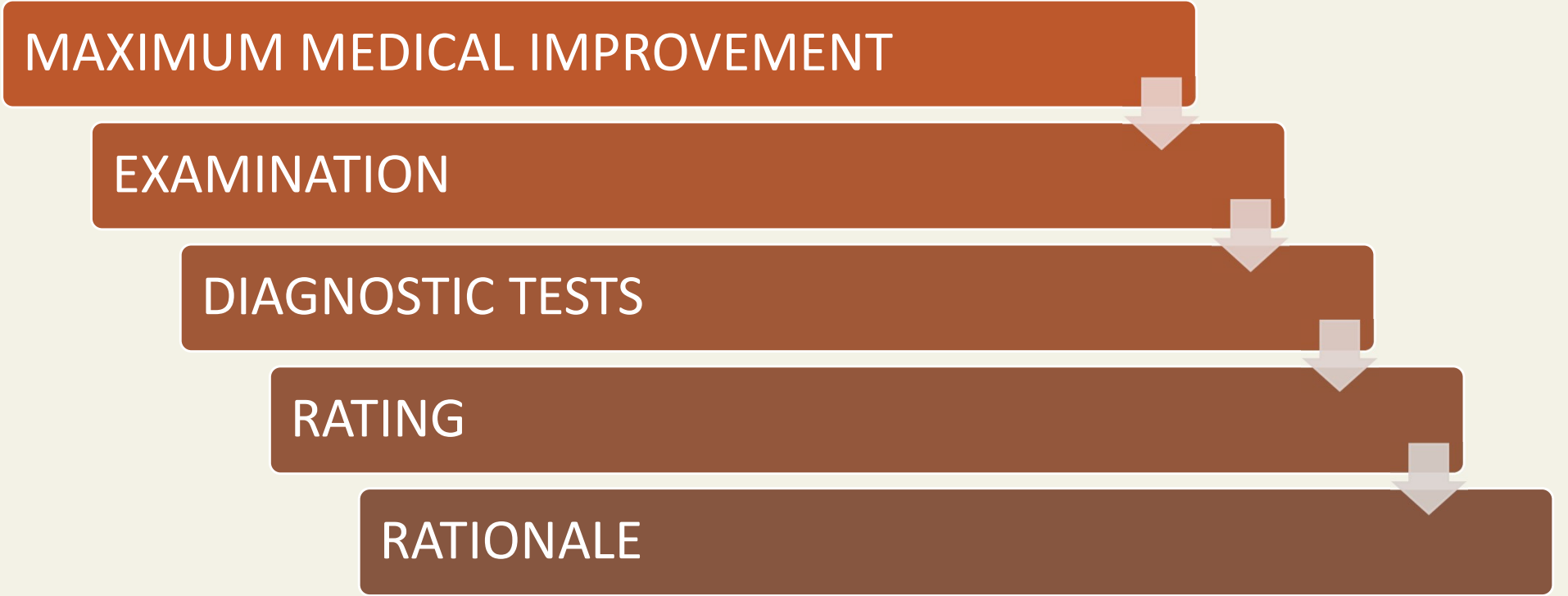


'ISSUE 1 DETAIL': LATE REPORT AND DISAGREES WITH EXAMINER FINDINGS APPEAR MOST OFTEN.



Required Components of All Impairment Ratings

MAXIMUM MEDICAL IMPROVEMENT



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graph TD; A[MAXIMUM MEDICAL IMPROVEMENT] --> B[EXAMINATION]; B --> C[DIAGNOSTIC TESTS]; C --> D[RATING]; D --> E[RATIONALE];
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EXAMINATION

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

RATING

RATIONALE

Complaints alleged against Examiner

Discriminatory treatment

Failure to allow translator

Inappropriate actions

Inappropriate comments

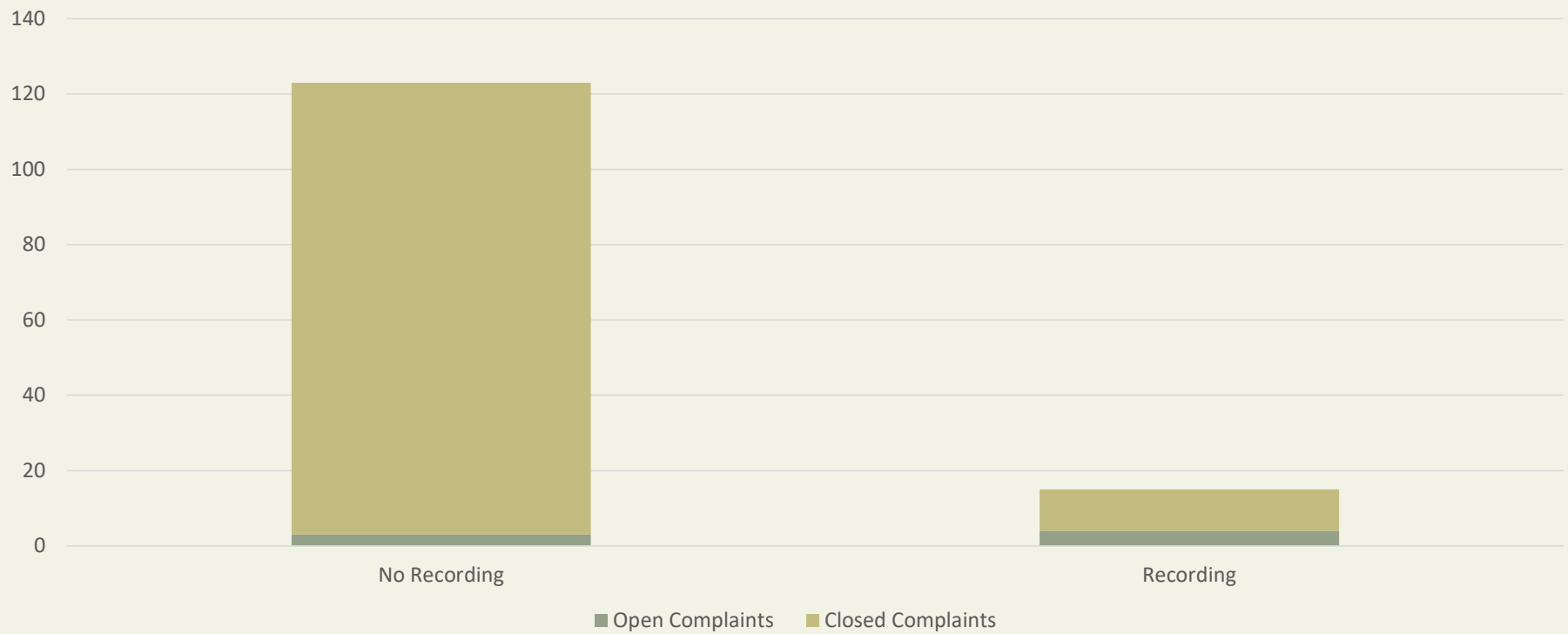
Program rule violation

Quality of care

Unprofessional exam

“Other” category with many related to recording.

Open/Closed Complaints and Recording



Questions?



IME Recording Update



Why a third-party recording pilot?

RCW 51.36.070 effective 7/1/23, giving workers the right to record IMEs

WA is a dual consent state for recording (both parties must agree to recording); some examiners placing co-recording as condition to allow worker to record, not allowing unilateral recording by worker

External partners disagree on examiner ability to co-record resulting in delays and/or inability to schedule exams

Department proposed rules to address concerns around co-recording

External feedback did not support moving forward with co-recording rule

Through pilot L&I will be able to assess if both parties would be willing to use 3rd party recording service, thus avoiding need for co-recording

Pilot Details

- 6 months: **3/1/25 through 8/31/25**
- Any worker wishing to record can use the service
- Available for co-recording (for those instances when worker still would like to do their own recording)



Desired Outcomes...



- Reduction in the delays resulting from cancellation and rescheduling of IMEs when a worker chooses to record.
- Less risk and administrative burden associated with maintaining multiple recordings of same exam:
 - Workers may opt to use this service in lieu of using their own device to record and make examiner co-recording unnecessary
 - Mitigates concerns around chain of custody, storage security, and misuse of recordings
- Inform any future rulemaking efforts or changes to IME policies.

Utilization as of June 30, 2025

209 recordings using 3rd party
Medical Memory service (Averaging 2 per
day; 90% state fund claims)

4 firms currently using

- Central Seattle Panel
- ExamWorks
- Medical Consultants Network
- Medical Examiner Specialists

Authenticated 51 devices

4 workers have requested to view
recording

Continued Outreach to broaden
awareness of pilot



July 28th Stakeholder Engagement- Qualitative Evaluation Focus Areas:

- System Functionality
- Utilization
- Efficiencies (scheduling or internal)
- Vendor and L&I responsiveness (support)
- Enhancement opportunities

Solicited Recommendations

- Interest in future use post pilot?
- What would it take for you to adopt use?
- Should pilot be...
 - Extended; if so, for how long e.g. 6 months
 - Ended
 - Service made available permanently

Stakeholder feedback and recommendation....

- All stakeholders represented during feedback session; 28 participants
 - 6 representatives across the 4 firms participating
 - 8 worker attorneys
 - 3 self-insured employers
 - WA IME Coalition
 - Internal (SI, Claims)
- External stakeholders asked to vote to end, extend 6 months to further inform policy, make service permanent option. Unanimous vote for extending 6 months.

Recommendation: Extend Pilot for 6 months

- Will help further inform policy
- Changes for Phase 2 of the pilot based on feedback:
 - Allow workers to download app and use their personal device to record with service; this would increase utilization and not be contingent on firm participating in pilot, it is worker right to use service and in spirit of legislation
 - Develop additional educational materials to mitigate misconception that recordings are being stored on local devices

Decision on Pilot Continuation Pending as of 8/12/25

Questions?



IME Data Report

- 2020 legislation amended requirements for IMEs and tasked L&I with establishing IME Work Group to improve IME processes and report findings and recommendations back to legislature.
- WAC 296-23-403 resulted and established reporting requirement *“The department will regularly provide independent medical examination data to interested parties that includes emerging trends. As much as possible, the data should include and differentiate between examinations for claims insured by the department and those covered by self-insured employers.”*
- Self-Insurance Medical Bill EDI and State Fund billing data used.

Last published May 2023 covering claims w/ initial injury dates of 1/1/18 through 6/30/22.

Data Presented broken out by SF and SI...

- # IMES per claim since date of injury
- % claims with an IME broken out in various iterations (1 IME, any claims in excess of 1, multiples e.g. 2, 3, 4, 5+)
- Days to first IME
- Days between IMEs
- # IMES by date of service (calendar year)
- Top purposes for IMEs (SF data only)

<https://www.lni.wa.gov/agency/docs/IMEreportMay2023.pdf>

Feedback...

- Is report useful?
- Cadance (annually, quarterly)?
- Metrics redundant?
- What's missing or would better meet your needs?

Questions?



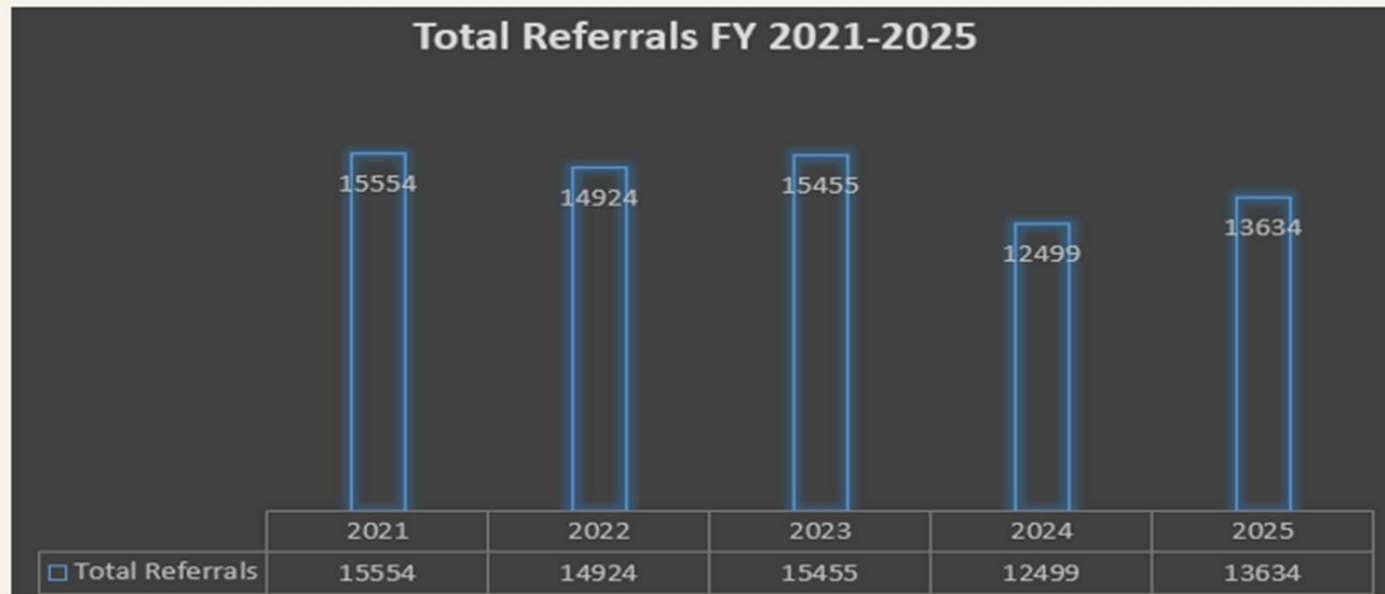
Claims Updates – Nancy Adams

Questions?

IME Scheduling Trends

Shannon Rushing

There were a total of 1156 referrals created in July 2025



Questions?



Self-Insurance – LaNae Lien

Questions?

Open Discussion

- Questions & Comments
- Future Topic Suggestions
- Public Comments
- Next Meeting
 - ***August 8, 2025***