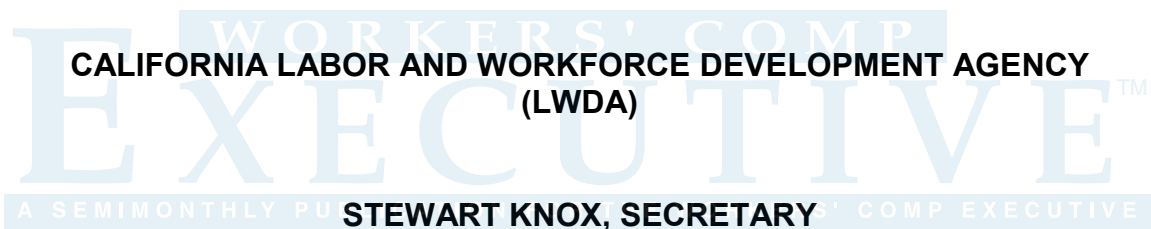


State of California
Department of Industrial Relations
Division of Workers' Compensation

2024 Independent Medical Review (IMR) Report: Analysis of 2023 Data



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (DIR)

KATIE HAGEN, DIRECTOR

DIVISION OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION (DWC)

GEORGE PARISOTTO, ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

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Executive Summary

In September 2012, Governor Brown signed Senate Bill (SB) 863 into law. This reform of the workers' compensation system in California included adoption of the Independent Medical Review (IMR) process, which went into effect January 1, 2013. Now in its twelfth year, IMR continues to provide expedient, effective resolution of disputes over medical necessity for injured workers treated in California's workers' compensation system.

IMR activity increased from 2022 to 2023. The Independent Medical Review Organization (IMRO) processed 175,027 applications for medical dispute resolution, a 2.45% increase from 2022. Over 30,000 applications were found to be duplicates, and nearly 11,906 were deemed ineligible. Eligible applications averaged 11,091 per month.

Concurrently, the IMRO issued 130,774 IMR final determinations, 2.93% more than the previous year. Throughout the year, the average length of time the IMRO took to issue a final determination after the receipt of all medical records was nine to ten days. Expert reviewers licensed in the state of California reviewed 83% of all IMR cases, and around 75% were evaluated by a reviewer with board certification in Occupational Medicine, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Pain Medicine, or Orthopedic Surgery.

Overall, the IMRO overturned 10.2% of the Utilization Review (UR) decisions that denied treatment requests made by physicians treating injured workers. This rate of overturn was more than in the previous year (8.2%).

Pharmaceutical requests accounted for 31.4% of the issues in dispute. This reflects a slight increase in 2023 (31.4%) from 2022 (29.7%), when compared with the decreasing trend in prior years (42% in 2018, 37% in 2019, and 34% in 2020). Antidepressants comprised 23.7% of the drug requests; the second and third-highest number of requests were for NSAIDs (20%) and Antiulcer Agents (18.2%).

The treatment request denials that were overturned most often were for evaluation and management services (17.6% overturned), behavioral and mental health service (16.8% overturned), and other programs (e.g., Functional Restoration program, Brain Injury program, Weight loss program, etc.) (15% overturned).

Like treating physicians and UR practitioners, the IMRO's expert reviewers follow guidelines set forth in the Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) for determining medical necessity. These guidelines are free to providers through an agreement with the Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) and its publisher, the ReedGroup ([MTUS Registration \(mdguidelines.com\)](https://www.mdguidelines.com)). The DWC offers a complimentary online continuing education module available to anyone interested in learning about the application of the MTUS and the use of evidence-based medicine for California's injured workers ([MTUS Physician Education Module](#)).

Introduction

In September 2012, Governor Brown signed SB 863 into law. This reform of the workers' compensation system in California included adoption of the IMR process, which went into effect on January 1, 2013, for injuries that occurred in 2013. On July 1, 2013, IMR was available to all injured workers regardless of their dates of injury.

IMR is an efficient, expedient process for resolving disputes over the medical necessity of medical treatment recommended by physicians for injured workers but denied or modified in the Utilization Review (UR) process ([UR information](#)). IMR's expert reviewers follow the recommendations of the Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) and the principles of evidence-based medicine to determine the medical necessity of requested treatments ([MTUS information](#)).

This annual report analyzes the activity and progress in the program's eleventh year.

About IMR

Essentially, IMR is the process by which to appeal an adverse utilization review decision.

When a physician treating an injured worker makes a treatment request, the claims administrator may put the request through utilization review (UR) to determine whether the request is medically necessary. If the request is modified or denied, the injured worker may appeal the modification or denial via a process called independent medical review (IMR).

To appeal a UR denial or modification decision, the injured worker (or their representative) must sign the pre-filled IMR application form (and, if applicable, the authorized representative designation form), and timely submit it, along with a copy of the UR decision letter, to the IMR organization (IMRO). Upon receipt of a complete IMR application, the IMRO will determine eligibility and begin the process of collecting pertinent records from the claim's administrator, the injured worker (or their representative), and the requesting physician.

After receiving the medical records, the IMRO assigns the case to an expert physician reviewer. Unless the case is terminated or withdrawn during the process, it is resolved when the assigned physician reviewer communicates the IMR decision(s) to the worker or representative, employer or insurer, and treating physician in a Final Determination Letter (FDL). Redacted information in these FDLs is available on the DWC's website.

The cost of IMR is borne by employers (claims administrators) through direct payment to the IMRO. Maximus Federal Services has been the contracted IMRO since the program's inception in 2013 and is currently under contract to provide IMR through December 2024.

Analysis of 2023 IMR Data

The IMRO provides the DWC with case and treatment data for all completed case decisions, including information directly from the IMR application, details on the types of treatment under review from UR reports, and evidence cited by the expert reviewers in their determinations of medical necessity. The data used for this report was extracted and collected for analysis on March 21, 2024, and is current as of that date.

All treatment requests for cases issued in 2023 were assigned specific service categories to assist with analysis of particular type of treatments and their medical necessity resolutions. Geographic regions were determined from the ZIP Codes of the IMR applications as listed in the case files. The ZIP Codes were matched against the monthly US Postal ZIP Code Table identifying ZIP codes by county. Counties were then grouped by region. (See Geographic Regions Appendix for more information.)



Findings

Applications

In 2023, the IMRO received a total of **175,027** IMR applications, 2.45% more than the previous year (170,855). As in previous years, approximately one in five applications (17.2%) duplicated an application previously received. After duplicate applications were subtracted, the number of “unique” applications received totaled **144,999** for the year.

After an application is determined not to be a duplicate, it is screened for eligibility. In 2023, **133,093** eligible applications were processed by the IMRO, a monthly average of 11,091. This average is a slight increase (2.9%) from the average of 10,774 in 2022.

Table 1. IMR Applications by Calendar Year (CY), 2013 to 2023

Calendar Year	Total Number of Applications Filed	Total Number of Unique Applications	Total Number of Applications Deemed Eligible
2023	175,027	144,999	133,093
2022	170,855	140,386	129,298
2021	178,927	145,702	136,828
2020	184,100	148,713	139,411
2019	222,236	177,204	165,610
2018	252,565	199,956	185,783
2017	248,251	192,538	175,118
2016	249,436	196,057	172,452
2015	253,779	195,685	165,427
2014	228,207	171,704	142,658
2013	83,921	68,323	52,544
TOTAL	2,247,304	1,781,267	1,598,222

Table 2. IMR Applications by Month, 2023

Month	Total Number of Applications Filed	Total Number of Unique Applications	Total Number of Applications Deemed Eligible
January	13,384	11,144	10,178
February	13,079	10,894	10,102
March	15,420	12,884	11,875
April	13,878	11,516	10,674
May	15,600	12,994	11,922
June	15,531	12,771	11,705
July	14,471	11,953	10,928
August	15,544	12,814	11,803
September	13,628	11,210	10,303
October	15,039	12,359	11,379
November	15,172	12,595	11,473
December	14,281	11,865	10,751

Month	Total Number of Applications Filed	Total Number of Unique Applications	Total Number of Applications Deemed Eligible
TOTAL	175,027	144,999	133,093

Ineligible Applications

Common reasons that make IMR applications ineligible are as follows:

- (1) It lacks the signature of the injured worker or their representative.
- (2) It is not submitted within 30 days of service of the written UR decision.
- (3) The UR report is not attached to the application; and/or
- (4) The UR does not reflect a determination of medical necessity (conditional non-certification).

Additionally, an application may be ineligible if the claims administrator asserts a factual, medical, or legal basis that precludes liability for the injury or for the specific course of treatment.

The number of applications determined to be ineligible increased slightly from the previous year (8.2%), and the percentage of these applications in proportion to all “unique” applications increased slightly from last year (0.3%). In 2023, the total number of untimely filings, those not submitted within 30 days of service of the written UR decision, decreased (-6.3%) from 2022’s total number of untimely filings.

Table 3. Ineligible Applications as Percentage of Unique Filings, CY 2013 to CY 2023

Calendar Year	Total Number of Unique Applications	Total Number of Ineligible Applications	Percent of Applications Deemed Ineligible
2023	144,999	11,906	8.2%
2022	140,386	11,088	7.9%
2021	145,702	8,874	6.1%
2020	148,713	9,277	6.1%
2019	177,204	11,594	6.5%
2018	199,956	14,173	7.1%
2017	192,538	17,420	9.0%
2016	196,057	23,605	12.0%
2015	195,685	30,258	15.5%
2014	171,704	29,046	16.9%
2013	68,323	15,729	23.0%
TOTAL	1,781,267	182,970	10.3%

Table 4. Reasons for Ineligibility, 2023 vs. 2022

Category	CY 2023	CY 2022
No Signature on Application	1249	996
Untimely Filing	1984	2117
No UR Report Attached	2,467	2,351

Category	CY 2023	CY 2022
No Signature and No UR Report	113	109
Conditional Non-certification (CNC)*	4,892	4,346
Other	1,201	1,169
TOTAL	11,906	11,088

*Conditionally noncertified decision (CNC): A UR decision that has been denied because the claims administrator requested but did not receive additional information (which may take the form of the results of a test or an exam) necessary to determine medical necessity of the requested treatment.



IMR Timeline

Standard IMR decisions must be issued within 30 days of receipt of the complete IMR application and supporting medical records and within 3 days for expedited applications. Of the 130,774 *standard* IMR decisions issued in 2023, 439 were issued outside the statutory time requirement. The number is higher in 2023 due to a one-time issue with a mail fulfillment vendor that has since been resolved. The monthly average length of time taken to issue a decision after receipt of complete medical records was steady throughout the year, taking 8 to 9 days for most months.

Table 5. Average Number of Days to Complete Standard IMRs, 2023

Month	Total Number of Standard Final Decisions Issued	Average Age from Assigned Date	Average Age from Complete Medical Records
January	11,089	29	9
February	9,907	26	8
March	10,765	25	8
April	6,343	27	10
May	14,240	31	12
June	13,031	28	9
July	10,836	25	6
August	11,855	25	8
September	10,684	25	8
October	11,103	24	6
November	9,931	25	7
December	10,990	26	7

"Average Age from Assigned Date" represents the average number of calendar days required to process an IMR from the date the Notice of Assignment and Request for Information (NOARFI) was mailed to the date the Final Determination Letter (FDL) was mailed.

"Average Age from Complete Medical Records" represents the average number of calendar days required to process an IMR from the date MAXIMUS received all necessary records to the date the FDL was mailed.

Table 6. Standard IMR Final Determinations Issued, CY 2013 to CY 2023

Calendar Year	Total Number of FDLs Issued
2023	130,774
2022	127,046
2021	133,400
2020	136,698
2019	163,698
2018	184,672
2017	172,145
2016	175,960
2015	165,496

Calendar Year	Total Number of FDLs Issued
2014	143,840
2013	3,682
TOTAL	1,536,411

In 2023, one hundred and four expedited cases were decided. The average length of time from the receipt of application and supporting records to issuance of decision was three days.

Expedited Review: UR or IMR conducted when the injured worker’s condition is such that the injured worker faces an imminent and serious threat to his or her health, including, but not limited to, the potential loss of life, limb, or other major bodily function, or the normal timeframe for the decision-making process would be detrimental to the injured worker's life or health or could jeopardize the injured worker's permanent ability to regain maximum function. (8 CCR § 9792.6.1(j))

Geographic Region of the Injured Worker

Case decision outcomes for the sample period of October to December 2023 indicate consistency in case dispositions across all geographic regions in the state.

Table 7. Case Outcomes by Geographic Region of the Injured Worker, Q4 2023

Region	Total Number	Uphold	Partial Overturn	Overturn
Bay Area	6,807	86.6%	5.5%	7.9%
Central Coast	2,109	86.9%	5.2%	8.0%
Central Valley	4,468	87.1%	5.3%	7.5%
Eastern Sierra Foothills	656	87.7%	6.4%	5.9%
Inland Empire	5,743	87.6%	6.4%	6.1%
Los Angeles	6,891	87.5%	6.9%	5.6%
North State-Shasta	461	85.9%	7.4%	6.7%
Sacramento Valley	1,511	87.2%	4.7%	8.1%
Sacramento Valley-North	480	87.1%	7.1%	5.8%
San Diego	2,043	86.1%	5.7%	8.2%
Out-of-State/Others	894	89.8%	5.0%	5.1%
TOTAL	32,063	87.2%	5.9%	6.9%

Overturn = All the disputed items/services are necessary and appropriate.

Partial Overturn = Some (not all) of the disputed items/services are necessary and appropriate.

Uphold = None of the disputed items/services are medically necessary and appropriate.

Physician Reviewers

Expert reviewers may hold licenses to practice in any of the 50 states. Reviewers licensed in California evaluated 83% of the decisions in 2023. This is a lesser proportion than in the previous years, when reviewers licensed in the state evaluated 87% of the decisions issued in 2022, and 88% of the decisions issued in 2021.

Although expert reviewers may have more than one board certification, cases are assigned based on the *relevant* specialty of the reviewer, determined by the issues in dispute during preliminary review. The expert reviewer does not need to have the same board certification as the requesting physician but needs to be knowledgeable and qualified to review the requested treatment. Reviewers with four specialties common in the practice of industrial injury and illness completed 75% of all case decisions in 2023.

Table 8. IMR Expert Reviewers by Board Certification/Relevant Specialty, 2023

Board Certification	Total	Percentage
Occupational Medicine	47,624	36.3%
Orthopedic Surgery	22,522	17.2%
Pain Medicine	15,096	11.5%
Emergency Medicine	12,873	9.8%
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation	12,684	9.7%
Anesthesiology	5,151	3.9%
Oriental Medicine	3,939	3.0%
Chiropractor	3,076	2.3%
Neurology	2,213	1.7%
Psychologist	2,041	1.6%
Internal Medicine	1,380	1.1%
Psychiatry	911	0.7%
Foot Surgery	578	0.4%
Dentist	289	0.2%
Ophthalmology	135	0.1%
Podiatrist	114	0.1%
Other / Not Listed	544	0.4%
TOTAL	131,170	100.0%

Treatment Requests and Outcomes

“Treatment request” refers to the medical treatment that was denied or modified in UR and challenged through the IMR process. IMR cases have one or more disputed treatments. In 2023, 227,611 treatment request decisions were made in the 130,774 decided cases. Overall, 10.2% of these treatment request decisions were *overturned*, meaning the IMRO decided that the disputed service was medically necessary and appropriate. Conversely, a treatment request for a disputed service that is ultimately found not to be medically necessary and appropriate in IMR is *upheld*.

Pharmaceuticals are the most-often requested treatment for which UR modifications or denials issue. Since the establishment of the MTUS Drug Formulary in 2018, the number of pharmaceutical requests has steadily decreased in both the volume of requests received for review and their proportion to requests for other medical services.

Table 9. Outcomes for All Treatment Requests, CY 2013 to CY 2023

Calendar Year	Total Number of Treatment Requests	UR Decision Upheld	UR Decision Overturned
2023	227,611	89.8%	10.2%
2022	240,976	91.8%	8.2%
2021	264,196	92.8%	7.2%
2020	270,281	90.5%	9.5%
2019	319,505	89.6%	10.4%
2018	360,124	89.7%	10.3%
2017	343,451	91.7%	8.3%
2016	343,141	91.6%	8.4%
2015	308,765	88.8%	11.2%
2014	274,598	91.4%	8.6%
2013	7,805	84.3%	15.7%

Table 10. Treatment Request Outcomes by Category, 2023

Category	Total Number	Upheld	Overturned
Accommodation	468	89.1%	10.9%
Behavioral and Mental Health Services	3,985	83.2%	16.8%
Diagnostic Testing	29,725	86.8%	13.2%
DMEPOS	21,217	91.5%	8.5%
Evaluation and Management	10,366	82.4%	17.6%
Home Health	1,389	86.0%	14.0%
Injection	20,926	91.3%	8.7%
Pharmaceuticals	71,455	90.6%	9.4%
Programs	3,166	84.9%	15.1%
Rehabilitation	49,057	91.5%	8.5%
Surgery	15,247	89.8%	10.2%
Transportation	610	92.3%	7.7%

Category	Total Number	Upheld	Overtured
TOTAL	227,611	89.8%	10.2%

Table 11. Treatment Requests by Category and Percentage of Total, CY 2023 vs. CY 2022

Service Category	Total Treatment Requests CY 2023	Percent of CY 2023 Total	Total Treatment Requests CY 2022	Percent of CY 2022 Total
Accommodation	468	0.2%	317	0.1%
Behavioral and Mental Health	3,985	1.8%	3,992	1.7%
Diagnostic Testing	29,725	13.1%	43,181	17.9%
DMEPOS	21,217	9.3%	22,727	9.4%
Evaluation and Management	10,366	4.6%	10,383	4.3%
Home Health	1,389	0.6%	1,383	0.6%
Injection	20,926	9.2%	20,629	8.6%
Pharmaceuticals	71,455	31.4%	71,512	29.7%
Programs	3,166	1.4%	2,770	1.1%
Rehabilitation	49,057	21.6%	46,980	19.5%
Surgery	15,247	6.7%	16,632	6.9%
Transportation	610	0.3%	470	0.2%
TOTAL	227,611	100.0%	240,976	100.0%

Table 12. Treatment Requests for Pharmaceuticals by Drug Class, CY 2023

Category	Total Number	Upheld	Overtured
Opioids	18,701	92.4%	7.6%
Muscle Relaxants	11,839	98.1%	1.9%
Topical Analgesics	11,608	94.0%	6.0%
NSAIDS	7,317	80.0%	20.0%
Anti-Epilepsy Drugs	6,565	90.2%	9.8%
Others	6,408	84.1%	15.9%
Antiulcer Agents	2,088	81.8%	18.2%
Sedative-Hypnotics	1,857	92.0%	8.0%
Antidepressants	1,774	76.3%	23.7%
Anti-Infectives	1,302	96.9%	3.1%
Laxative	1,078	83.8%	16.2%
Benzodiazepines	918	96.1%	3.9%
TOTAL	71,455	90.6%	9.4%

Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule Treatment Guidelines

The MTUS includes medical treatment guidelines, a Medical Evidence Search Sequence, and a Methodology for Evaluating Medical Evidence to provide an evidence-based analytical framework for the treatment of work-related injuries. The MTUS assists medical providers in understanding which evidence-based treatments have been effective in providing improved medical outcomes. In making a determination of medical necessity for a requested treatment, IMR reviewers follow the guidance in the MTUS, which is updated regularly to remain current with the latest evidence-based treatment recommendations.

The current MTUS adopts and incorporates by reference the treatment guidelines of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM). This past year, DWC updated and adopted new guidelines for the Cornerstones of Disability Prevention & Management chapter, Hand, Wrist, and Forearm Disorders chapter, Shoulder Disorders chapter, and workplace COVID-19.

Table 13. Current California MTUS-ACOEM Treatment Guidelines

Section/Chapter	MTUS Effective Date
Prevention	October 31, 2018
General Approach to Initial Assessment and Documentation	October 31, 2018
Initial Approaches to Treatment	March 14, 2022
Cornerstones of Disability Prevention & Management	August 10, 2023
Ankle and Foot Disorders	September 21, 2020
Antiemetics	October 26, 2020
Cervical and Thoracic Spine	April 18, 2019
Chronic Pain	December 1, 2017
COVID-19	March 27, 2024
Elbow Disorders	April 18, 2019
Eye Disorders	December 1, 2017
Hand, Wrist, and Forearm Disorders	November 10, 2023
Hip and Groin Disorders	October 7, 2019
Occupational Interstitial Lung Disease	September 21, 2020
Knee Disorders	September 21, 2020
Low Back Disorders	November 23, 2021
Occupational Work-Related Asthma	September 21, 2020
Opioids	December 1, 2017
Shoulder Disorders	August 10, 2023
Traumatic Brain Injury	October 31, 2018
Workplace Mental Health: Introduction	August 11, 2019
Workplace Mental Health: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder	April 18, 2019
Workplace Mental Health: Depressive Disorders	September 21, 2020
Workplace Mental Health: Anxiety Disorders	July 19, 2021

Conclusion

Over the course of the year, the IMRO processed almost 14,500 applications every month, a similar number to those processed in 2022. The number of standard case determinations issued in 2023 (11,091) was slightly more than in 2022 (10,774).

Most of the applications filed (not counting duplicates) were determined to be eligible (92.1%) in 2022 and (91.7%) in 2023. The volume of ineligible applications increased slightly compared with total yearly overall filings. The number of applications that were not submitted on time (within 30 days of service of the written UR decision) decreased, while the number of applications with no signature and/or which included a copy of the UR decision letter increased slightly.

99.95% of the standard cases were decided within the statutory time requirements. On average, reviews were completed within nine to ten days of the IMRO's receipt of the medical records, and less than 30 days from a case's notice of assignment.

The average rate of overturn for treatment request denials was 10.2%, up from 8.2% the previous year. The categories with the highest overturn rate were Evaluation and Management services (17.6%), Behavioral and Mental Health services (16.8%), and Programs (15%). The continued use of the MTUS Drug Formulary has resulted in a drop in the number of pharmaceutical requests, their share of overall requests, and a slight decrease in their average rate of overturn.

Most of the cases are being assigned to reviewers licensed in California. In 2023 expert reviewers licensed in the state evaluated 83% of IMR cases. The DWC meets regularly with the IMRO to address any concerns and to work on continuously improving the IMR process. This includes review of case errors, identification and resolution of program inefficiencies, and monitoring of IMR related appeals.

Appendices

Appendix A1. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Opioid Analgesics

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Hydrocodone (incl. ER)	2880	2638	92%	242	8%
Norco	5534	5016	91%	518	9%
Oxycodone (incl. ER)	1561	1449	93%	112	7%
Percocet	1542	1408	91%	134	9%
Tramadol (incl. ER)	3673	3498	95%	175	5%
Tylenol with Codeine	700	673	96%	27	4%
Other Opioid Analgesics	2811	2589	92%	222	8%
TOTAL	18701	17271	92%	1430	8%

Appendix A2. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Skeletal Muscle Relaxants

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Baclofen	1231	1210	98%	21	2%
Cyclobenzaprine	3822	3737	98%	85	2%
Flexeril	1554	1520	98%	34	2%
Methocarbamol	1057	1036	98%	21	2%
Robaxin	492	483	98%	9	2%
Soma	357	352	99%	5	1%
Tizanidine	2134	2107	99%	27	1%
Zanaflex	367	358	98%	9	2%
Other Muscle Relaxant	825	811	98%	14	2%
TOTAL	11839	11614	98%	225	2%

Appendix A3. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Topical Analgesics

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Diclofenac	1587	1451	91%	136	9%
Lidocaine	4199	4079	97%	120	3%
Lidoderm	872	833	96%	39	4%
Lidopro	795	768	97%	27	3%
Miscellaneous topical non-opioids	457	420	92%	37	8%
Voltaren Gel	1733	1604	93%	129	7%
Other Topical Analgesics	1965	1757	89%	208	11%
TOTAL	11608	10912	94%	696	6%

Appendix A4. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: NSAIDs

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Celebrex	804	657	82%	147	18%
Diclofenac	1423	1267	89%	156	11%
Ibuprofen	1147	846	74%	301	26%
Meloxicam	716	547	76%	169	24%
Mobic	401	328	82%	73	18%
Naproxen (incl. ER)	829	627	76%	202	24%
Tylenol	322	241	75%	81	25%
Other NSAIDs	1675	1337	80%	338	20%
TOTAL	7317	5850	80%	1467	20%

Appendix A5. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Anticonvulsants

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Gabapentin (incl. ER)	4334	3961	91%	373	9%
Lyrica	759	662	87%	97	13%

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Neurontin	479	435	91%	44	9%
Pregabalin	568	502	88%	66	12%
Other Anticonvulsants	425	360	85%	65	15%
TOTAL	6565	5920	90%	645	10%

Appendix A6. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Sedatives/Hypnotics

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Ambien (incl. CR)	365	360	99%	5	1%
Moderate Sedation	207	197	95%	10	5%
Trazodone	422	368	87%	54	13%
Zolpidem (incl. ER)	220	218	99%	2	1%
Other Sedatives	643	566	88%	77	12%
TOTAL	1857	1709	92%	148	8%

Appendix A7. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Antiulcer Agents

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Lansoprazole	364	299	82%	65	18%
Omeprazole	653	510	78%	143	22%
Prevacid	217	180	83%	37	17%
Prilosec	198	174	88%	24	12%
Other Antiulcer Agents	656	544	83%	112	17%
TOTAL	2088	1707	82%	381	18%

Appendix A8. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Antidepressants

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Amitriptyline	231	159	69%	72	31%
Cymbalta	394	312	79%	82	21%
Duloxetine	266	195	73%	71	27%
Nortriptyline	183	144	79%	39	21%
Other Antidepressants	700	543	78%	157	22%
TOTAL	1774	1353	76%	421	24%

Appendix A9. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Benzodiazepines

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Alprazolam	93	88	95%	5	5%
Diazepam	155	148	95%	7	5%
Valium	120	109	91%	11	9%

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Xanax	164	161	98%	3	2%
Other Benzodiazepines	386	376	97%	10	3%
TOTAL	918	882	96%	36	4%

Appendix A10. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Anti-infective Agents

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Cephalexin	223	221	99%	2	1%
Keflex	661	659	100%	2	0%
Other anti-infective agents	418	381	91%	37	9%
TOTAL	1302	1261	97%	41	3%

Appendix A11. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Laxatives

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Colace	545	450	83%	95	17%
Docusate	133	114	86%	19	14%
Senna	80	70	88%	10	13%
Other Laxatives	320	269	84%	51	16%
TOTAL	1078	903	84%	175	16%

Appendix A12. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: All Other Drug Classes

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Antiemetics	790	661	84%	129	16%
Opioid Antagonist Analgesics	608	514	85%	94	15%
Antimigraine Agents	565	475	84%	90	16%
Analgesics	550	465	85%	85	15%
Antineoplastic Hormones	524	474	90%	50	10%
Enteral Nutrition	493	434	88%	59	12%
Antihypertensive Combinations	425	305	72%	120	28%
Anesthetics	409	392	96%	17	4%
Investigational Antidiabetic	161	140	87%	21	13%
Antiasthma Bronchodilators	158	90	57%	68	43%
CNS Stimulants	154	140	91%	14	9%
Gastric Medications	149	125	84%	24	16%
Erectile Dysfunction	133	110	83%	23	17%
Other/Unclassified/Not Found	133	121	91%	12	9%
Adrenal Corticosteroids	132	106	80%	26	20%

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Anticoagulants	127	106	83%	21	17%
Antipsychotics	119	102	86%	17	14%
Lipid Supplements	108	91	84%	17	16%
Cardiovascular Medications	101	76	75%	25	25%
Topical Compounds	78	67	86%	11	14%
Gastrointestinal Medications	54	42	78%	12	22%
Botulinum Toxin	45	41	91%	4	9%
Alpha Blockers	37	29	78%	8	22%
Anti-Parkinson Agents	35	33	94%	2	6%
Antihistamines	32	24	75%	8	25%
Barbituric Acid Derivative	29	27	93%	2	7%
Androgens Anabolic	29	25	86%	4	14%
Beta Blockers	21	15	71%	6	29%
Cannabinoids	17	17	100%		0%
TOTAL	6216	5247	84%	969	16%



Appendix B1. Treatment Request Outcomes: Behavioral and Mental Health Services

Subcategory: Evaluation and Management

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Beck Anxiety and/or Depression Inventory	212	212	100%	0	0%
Psychiatrist	354	302	85%	52	15%
Psychologist	464	358	77%	106	23%
TOTAL	1030	872	85%	158	15%

Subcategory: Therapies

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Behavioral Therapy	973	820	84%	153	16%
Biofeedback	102	90	88%	12	12%
Cognitive Therapy	1375	1088	79%	287	21%
Hypnotherapy	159	137	86%	22	14%
Other therapies	346	307	89%	39	11%
TOTAL	2955	2442	83%	513	17%

Appendix B2. Treatment Request Outcomes: Programs

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Functional Restoration	1868	1526	82%	342	18%
Gym Membership	235	233	99%	2	1%
Weight Loss Program	152	132	87%	20	13%
Work Conditioning	356	331	93%	25	7%
Work Hardening	178	169	95%	9	5%
Other Programs	377	298	79%	79	21%
TOTAL	3166	2689	85%	477	15%

Appendix B3. Treatment Request Outcomes: Diagnostic Testing

Subcategory: EMG/NCV/NCS

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Electromyography (EMG)	3522	3078	87%	444	13%
Nerve Conduction Velocity	341	294	86%	47	14%
Other nerve tests	24	23	96%	1	4%
TOTAL	3887	3395	87%	492	13%

Subcategory: Imaging, Radiology

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Arthrogram	234	197	84%	37	16%
Bone Scan	136	121	89%	15	11%
CT scan	1070	933	87%	137	13%
Echocardiogram	206	158	77%	48	23%
Fluoroscopy	63	50	79%	13	21%
MRI	10993	9740	89%	1253	11%
Ultrasound	2300	2079	90%	221	10%
X-Rays	2588	2067	80%	521	20%
Other imaging	451	428	95%	23	5%
TOTAL	18041	15773	87%	2268	13%

Subcategory: Lab and Pathology

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
CBC	930	838	90%	92	10%
Metabolic Panel	586	509	87%	77	13%
Urinalysis	712	659	93%	53	7%
Urine Drug Screen	1802	1455	81%	347	19%
Other lab tests	2079	1801	87%	278	13%
TOTAL	6109	5262	86%	847	14%

Subcategory: Other Diagnostic Tests

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Electrocardiogram (EKG)	769	644	84%	125	16%
Other tests	919	739	80%	180	20%
TOTAL	1688	1383	82%	305	18%

Appendix B4. Treatment Request Outcomes: DMEPOS

Subcategory: Durable Medical Equipment (DME)

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Continual Passive Motion	467	448	96%	19	4%
Exercise Kit	518	433	84%	85	16%
Hot/Cold/Compression	4500	4353	97%	147	3%
Traction Unit	147	147	100%		0%
Othe DME	1064	890	84%	174	16%
TOTAL	6696	6271	94%	425	6%

Subcategory: Electrical Stimulation

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
E-stim Supplies	791	777	98%	14	2%
H-Wave Unit	1411	1268	90%	143	10%
Interferential Unit	309	304	98%	5	2%
TENS Unit	2738	2521	92%	217	8%
Other elec. stimulation	412	410	100%	2	0%
TOTAL	5661	5280	93%	381	7%

Subcategory: Prosthetics & Orthotics

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Brace-Splint-Immobilizer	2749	2416	88%	333	12%
Collar	249	240	96%	9	4%
Lumbar Support	362	349	96%	13	4%
Orthotics/Prosthetics	735	613	83%	122	17%
TOTAL	4095	3618	88%	477	12%

Subcategory: Supplies

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Bone Growth Stimulator	359	349	97%	10	3%
Commodos/Raised Toilet Seat	184	155	84%	29	16%
Conductive Gel	3	3	100%		0%
Crutches	328	275	84%	53	16%
Electrodes	58	54	93%	4	7%
Hot/Cold/Compression Wraps	1059	969	92%	90	8%

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Sling	561	505	90%	56	10%
TENS Pads/patches/wires	555	493	89%	62	11%
Walker	517	436	84%	81	16%
Other supplies	1141	1005	88%	136	12%
TOTAL	4765	4244	89%	521	11%

Appendix B5. Treatment Request Outcomes: Evaluation and Management

Subcategory: Dental Services

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Dental Service	919	694	76%	225	24%

Subcategory: Evaluation and Management

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Multidisciplinary Evaluation	644	503	78%	141	22%
Office Visit	677	552	82%	125	18%
Other	50	40	80%	10	20%
TOTAL	1371	1095	80%	276	20%

Subcategory: Medical Specialties

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Anesthesiology	15	14	93%	1	7%
Consult	1360	1108	81%	252	19%
Follow-up	1197	884	74%	313	26%
Medical Clearance	2329	2145	92%	184	8%
Orthopedic and Orthopedic Surgery	669	559	84%	110	16%
Pain Management	854	707	83%	147	17%
Other	1652	1336	81%	316	19%
TOTAL	8076	6753	84%	1323	16%

Appendix B6. Treatment Request Outcomes: Home Health and Transportation

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Home Health/Care/Help	1389	1195	86%	194	14%
Transportation	610	563	92%	47	8%
TOTAL	1999	1758	88%	241	12%

Appendix B7. Treatment Request Outcomes: Injections

Subcategory: Peripheral

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Botox	204	179	88%	25	12%
Corticosteroid/Steroid	175	146	83%	29	17%
Injection - Ankle	165	158	96%	7	4%
Injection - Elbow	258	219	85%	39	15%
Injection - Finger/thumb	90	75	83%	15	17%
Injection - Foot	113	98	87%	15	13%
Injection - Hand	69	55	80%	14	20%
Injection - Hip	276	220	80%	56	20%
Injection - Knee	1435	1259	88%	176	12%
Injection - Shoulder	921	718	78%	203	22%
Injection - Wrist	305	243	80%	62	20%
Nerve Block	960	848	88%	112	12%
PRP (Platelet Rich Plasma)	3107	3049	98%	58	2%
Synvisc	86	78	91%	8	9%
Trigger Point	1402	1230	88%	172	12%
Viscosupplementation	133	116	87%	17	13%
Other peripheral	311	263	85%	48	15%
TOTAL	10010	8954	89%	1056	11%

Subcategory: Spine

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Caudal Epidural	262	244	93%	18	7%
Cervical Injection	1376	1320	96%	56	4%
Epidural	1587	1518	96%	69	4%
Facet	799	765	96%	34	4%
Lumbar Epidural	1861	1708	92%	153	8%
Lumbar Injection	274	243	89%	31	11%
Medial Branch Block	1777	1561	88%	216	12%
Sacroiliac (SI)	885	838	95%	47	5%
Transforaminal Injection	1940	1807	93%	133	7%
Other spine surgery	133	127	95%	6	5%
TOTAL	10894	10131	93%	763	7%

Subcategory: Other Injections

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Other Injection	22	20	91%	2	9%



Appendix B8. Treatment Request Outcomes: Rehabilitation

Subcategory: Acupuncture

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Acupuncture	9167	8528	93%	639	7%

Subcategory: Chiropractic

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Chiropractic	5436	4823	89%	613	11%
Manual Manipulation	294	251	85%	43	15%
TOTAL	5730	5074	89%	656	11%

Subcategory: Physical Therapy/Occupational Therapy (PT/OT)

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Active and passive modalities, PT and/or OT	8146	7467	92%	679	8%
Occupational Therapy	1884	1712	91%	172	9%
Physical Therapy	16265	14888	92%	1377	8%
Other	911	812	89%	99	11%
TOTAL	27206	24879	91%	2327	9%

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Subcategory: Other Rehabilitation

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Aqua Therapy	1557	1468	94%	89	6%
Hot/Cold Therapy	126	123	98%	3	2%
Compression Therapy	22	22	100%		0%
Functional Capacity Test	588	536	91%	52	9%
Hand Therapy	274	244	89%	30	11%
Massage Therapy	3138	2880	92%	258	8%
Other Therapies	1249	1135	91%	114	9%
TOTAL	6954	6408	92%	546	8%

Appendix B9. Treatment Request Outcomes: Surgery

Subcategory: Adjunct Surgical Services

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Adjunct Surgical Services	3077	2878	94%	199	6%
Assist Surgeon	1596	1472	92%	124	8%
Inpatient Stay	865	783	91%	82	9%
Other	1	1	100%		0%
TOTAL	5539	5134	93%	405	7%

Subcategory: Arthroscopic Surgery

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Arthroscopy	416	355	85%	61	15%
Surgery - Ankle	265	196	74%	69	26%
Surgery - Elbow	193	174	90%	19	10%
Surgery - Hip	104	90	87%	14	13%
Surgery - Knee	947	841	89%	106	11%
Surgery - Shoulder	736	667	91%	69	9%
Surgery - Wrist	281	244	87%	37	13%
TOTAL	2942	2567	87%	375	13%

Subcategory: Non-arthroscopic Surgery

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Arthroplasty	173	157	91%	16	9%
Carpal Tunnel	503	430	85%	73	15%
Discectomy	261	221	85%	40	15%
Fusion	781	744	95%	37	5%
Knee Replace/ Revision	253	230	91%	23	9%
Radiofrequency ablation	709	605	85%	104	15%
Rhizotomy	76	67	88%	9	12%
Shoulder Surgery	645	579	90%	66	10%
Spinal Cord Stimulator	392	366	93%	26	7%
Spine Surgery	638	579	91%	59	9%
Other surgery	954	772	81%	182	19%
TOTAL	5385	4750	88%	635	12%

Subcategory: Surgical Consult

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Preoperative Clearance	961	897	93%	64	7%
Other surgical consult	420	350	83%	70	17%
TOTAL	1381	1247	90%	134	10%

Geographic Regions Appendix

Region	Counties
Bay Area	Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma.
Central Coast	Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz and Ventura
Central Valley	Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Tulare
Eastern Sierra Foothills	Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Inyo, Mariposa, Mono, Nevada, Placer and Tuolumne
Inland Empire	Imperial, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino
Los Angeles	Los Angeles
North State/Shasta	Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Mendocino, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou and Trinity
Sacramento Valley–North	Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Sutter, Tehama and Yuba
Sacramento Valley–South	Sacramento and Yolo
San Diego	San Diego