

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

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# 2022 Independent Medical Review (IMR) Report: Analysis of 2021 Data

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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 tenth 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 decreased slightly from 2020 to 2021. The Independent Medical Review Organization (IMRO) processed 178,927 applications for medical dispute resolution, a 2.8% decrease from 2020. Over 33,000 applications were found to be duplicates, and nearly 8,900 were deemed ineligible. Eligible applications averaged 11,400 per month.

Concurrently, the IMRO issued 133,430 IMR final determinations, 2.4% fewer 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 88% of all IMR cases, and around 77% were evaluated by a reviewer with board certification in Occupational Medicine, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Pain Medicine, or Orthopedic Surgery.

Overall, the IMRO overturned 7.2% of the Utilization Review (UR) decisions that denied treatment requests made by physicians treating injured workers. This rate of overturn was lower than in the previous year (9.5%). As in previous years, similar rates of overturned cases occurring in all geographic regions in which injured workers reside.

Pharmaceutical requests accounted for 31% of the issues in dispute. This percentage continued the decrease from 2020 (34% of all requests), 2019 (37%) and 2018 (42%). Opioid analgesics comprised 27% of the drug requests, while second- and third-highest number of requests were for diagnostic tests (e.g., imaging, radiology) and rehabilitation services (e.g., physical therapy, chiropractic), each representing 19% of all services.

The treatment request denials that were overturned most often were for behavioral and mental health service (15% overturned); programs, such as functional restoration programs and gym memberships (13% overturned); and evaluation and management services, which include specialist consultations and dental service (12% overturned).

Along with treating physicians and UR practitioners, the IMRO's expert reviewers follow guidelines set forth in the Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) for determinations of medical necessity. These guidelines are free to providers through an agreement with the Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) and their publisher, 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 IMR process, which went into effect January 1, 2013, for injuries that occurred in 2013. On July 1, 2013, IMR was available to all injured workers regardless of their date 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 guidance of the Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) and the principles of evidence-based medicine to determine the medical necessity of the requested treatment ([MTUS information](#)).

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

### *About IMR*

Barring a change in the injured worker's condition, a UR decision modifying or denying a treatment request because it is not medically necessary is final and in effect for one year unless it is overturned through IMR. This process requires that qualified independent medical professionals determine the medical necessity of recommended treatments based on the MTUS.

To dispute a UR denial or modification on one or more requested treatments, injured workers or their legal representatives must, within 30 days, submit a signed IMR application that has been completed (except for the signature) by the UR claims administrator, along with a copy of the UR decision. Upon receipt of an eligible application, the IMRO requests medical records from the claims administrator, the worker, the attorney (if the worker is represented), 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 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 2022.

### *Analysis of 2021 IMR Data*

The IMRO provides the DWC with case and treatment data for all completed case decisions, including information directly from the IMRO application, details on the types of treatment under review from UR reports, and evidence cited by the expert reviewers in their determination of medical necessity. The data used for this report were extracted and collected for analysis on January 11, 2022, and current as of that date.

All treatment requests for cases issued in 2021 were assigned specific service categories to assist with analysis of particular types 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.)

### *Note on the COVID-19 Pandemic*

As the pandemic emerged at the beginning of 2020, IMR filings temporarily decreased. By the end of last year, IMR was processing 15,000 monthly applications, the same monthly average as in years prior. This year, there were no appreciable effects on the IMR program attributed to the pandemic. The IMRO continues to process around 15,000 applications each month. The average length of time to issue a decision remains within the statutory requirement of 30 days after receiving complete medical records.

## Findings

### Applications

In 2021, the IMRO received a total of **178,927** IMR applications, 2.8% fewer than the previous year (184,100). As in previous years, approximately one in five applications (18.6%) duplicated an application previously received. After duplicate applications were subtracted, the number of “unique” applications received totaled **145,702** for the year.

After an application is determined not to be a duplicate, it is screened for eligibility. In 2020, **136,828** eligible applications were processed by the IMRO, a monthly average of 11,402. This average is a slight decrease (1.9%) from the average of 11,618 in 2020.

Table 1. IMR Applications by Calendar Year (CY), 2013 to 2021

Calendar Year	Total Number of Applications Filed	Total Number of Unique Applications	Total Number of Applications Deemed Eligible
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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,901,422</b>	<b>1,495,882</b>	<b>1,335,831</b>

Table 2. IMR Applications by Month, 2021

Month	Total Number of Applications Filed	Total Number of Unique Applications	Total Number of Applications Deemed Eligible
January	13,763	11,232	10,579
February	14,542	11,569	10,856
March	17,102	13,775	12,917
April	16,228	13,114	12,365
May	14,178	11,450	10,745
June	15,724	12,899	12,120
July	14,421	11,817	11,144
August	15,542	12,732	12,058
September	14,785	12,072	11,357
October	14,376	11,906	11,018
November	14,516	11,953	11,103
December	13,750	11,183	10,566
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>178,927</b>	<b>145,702</b>	<b>136,828</b>

### *Ineligible Applications*

An IMR application is ineligible if:

- (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)

The number of applications determined to be ineligible decreased slightly from the previous year (-4.3%), and the percentage of these applications in proportion to all “unique” applications was the same as last year (6.1%). In 2021, the total number of untimely filings, those not submitted within 30 days of service of the written UR decision, decreased by a third from 2020’s total number of untimely filings.

**Table 3. Ineligible Applications as Percentage of Unique Filings, CY 2013 to CY 2021**

Calendar Year	Total Number of Unique Applications	Total Number of Ineligible Applications	Percent of Applications Deemed Ineligible
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%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,495,882</b>	<b>159,976</b>	<b>10.7%</b>

**Table 4. Reasons for Ineligibility, 2021 vs. 2020**

Category	CY 2021	CY 2020
No Signature on Application	809	750
Untimely Filing	469	740
No UR Report Attached	2,444	2,263
No Signature and No UR Report	101	108
Conditional Non-certification (CNC)*	3,650	3,994
Other	1,401	1,422
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,874</b>	<b>9,277</b>

\*Conditionally noncertified decision (CNC): A UR decision that has been denied because the treating physician has not provided the medical information requested by the claims administrator that is required to make a medical necessity determination on the treatment recommendation.



### IMR Timeline

Standard IMR decisions must be issued within 30 days of receipt of the medical records, and decisions for expedited applications issued within 72 hours. Of the 133,400 *standard* IMR decisions issued in 2021, only fifty-three were issued outside the statutory time requirement. The monthly average length of time taken to issue a decision after receipt of complete medical records was steady throughout the year, taking nine to ten days for most months.

Table 5. Average Number of Days to Complete Standard IMRs, 2021

Month	Total Number of Standard Final Decisions Issued	Average Age from Assigned Date	Average Age from Complete Medical Records
January	10,789	28	10
February	10,030	26	10
March	12,214	25	9
April	12,184	26	9
May	11,446	26	10
June	11,362	26	10
July	11,372	27	10
August	11,729	26	10
September	11,639	26	10
October	10,537	25	9
November	10,479	26	10
December	9,619	28	11

"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 2021

Calendar Year	Total Number of FDLs Issued
2021	133,400
2020	136,698
2019	163,698
2018	184,672
2017	172,145
2016	175,960
2015	165,496
2014	143,840
2013	3,682
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,279,591</b>

In 2021, 30 expedited cases were decided. The average length of time from receipt of application to issuance of decision was two 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 2021 indicate consistency in case dispositions across all geographic regions in the state.

**Table 7. Case Outcomes by Geographic Region of the Injured Worker, Q4 2021**

Region	Total Number	Uphold	Partial Overturn	Overturn
Bay Area	6,972	90.4%	3.0%	6.6%
Central Coast	2,238	90.1%	2.9%	7.0%
Central Valley	4,037	92.3%	2.4%	5.3%
Eastern Sierra Foothills	695	91.5%	3.2%	5.3%
Inland Empire	5,236	91.3%	3.6%	5.1%
Los Angeles	6,376	92.4%	3.1%	4.5%
North State-Shasta	415	91.3%	3.9%	4.8%
Sacramento Valley	1,567	90.0%	2.3%	7.7%
Sacramento Valley-North	467	91.4%	3.4%	5.2%
San Diego	1,993	89.6%	3.2%	7.2%
Out-of-State/Others	648	92.5%	2.9%	4.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30,644</b>	<b>91.3%</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

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 88% of the decisions in 2021. This is a higher proportion than in the previous years, when reviewers licensed in the state evaluated 79% of the decisions issued in 2020, and 65% of the decisions issued in 2019.

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 the 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 77% of all case decisions in 2021.

Table 8. IMR Expert Reviewers by Board Certification/Relevant Specialty, 2021

Board Certification	Total	Percentage
Occupational Medicine	35,991	27.0%
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation	27,762	20.8%
Pain Medicine	20,942	15.7%
Orthopedic Surgery	18,013	13.5%
Emergency Medicine	10,164	7.6%
Anesthesiology	3,535	2.6%
Oriental Medicine	3,461	2.6%
Neurology	3,136	2.4%
Chiropractic	2,446	1.8%
Psychology	2,029	1.5%
Preventive Medicine	1,598	1.2%
Neurological Surgery	1,339	1.0%
Psychiatry	978	0.7%
Internal Medicine	830	0.6%
Podiatrist	238	0.2%
Dentist	217	0.2%
Podiatric Surgery	216	0.2%
Ophthalmology	115	0.1%
Other/Not Listed	420	0.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>133,430</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### *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 2021, 264,196 treatment request decisions were made in the 133,430 decided cases. Overall, 7.2% of these treatment request decisions were *overturned*, meaning the IMRO decided that the disputed service is 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*.

UR denials/modifications for pharmaceuticals are the most-often requested issue in dispute. 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.

The percentage of upheld treatment request denials has increased across all treatment categories. Initial analysis of the data does not isolate the cause for this decrease. We will continue to study this trend and look at possible reasons for the increase in upholds.

**Table 9. Outcomes for All Treatment Requests, CY 2013 to CY 2021**

Calendar Year	Total Number of Treatment Requests	UR Decision Upheld	UR Decision Overturned
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, 2021**

Category	Total Number	Upheld	Overturned
Behavioral & Mental Health	3,631	84.8%	15.2%
Diagnostic Testing	49,163	93.0%	7.0%
DMEPOS	27,984	94.0%	6.0%
Evaluation & Management	11,284	88.5%	11.5%
Home Health & Transportation	1,741	93.7%	6.3%
Injection	21,867	95.0%	5.0%
Pharmaceuticals	80,932	93.5%	6.5%
Programs	2,481	87.5%	12.5%
Rehabilitation	49,423	92.2%	7.8%
Surgery	15,690	91.9%	8.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>264,196</b>	<b>92.8%</b>	<b>7.2%</b>

Table 11. Treatment Requests by Category and Percentage of Total, CY 2021 vs. CY 2020

Service Category	Total Treatment Requests CY 2021	Percent of CY 2021 Total	Total Treatment Requests CY 2019	Percent of CY 2020 Total
Behavioral & Mental Health	3,631	1.4%	3,480	1.3%
Diagnostic Testing	49,163	18.6%	48,720	18.0%
DMEPOS	27,984	10.6%	26,305	9.7%
Evaluation & Management	11,284	4.3%	11,090	4.1%
Home Health & Transportation	1,741	0.7%	1,776	0.7%
Injections	21,867	8.3%	21,425	7.9%
Pharmaceuticals	80,932	30.6%	92,294	34.2%
Programs	2,481	0.9%	2,228	0.8%
Rehabilitation	49,423	18.7%	46,337	17.1%
Surgeries	15,690	5.9%	16,626	6.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>264,196</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>270,281</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 12. Treatment Requests for Pharmaceuticals by Drug Class, CY 2021

Category	Total Number	Upheld	Overturned
Opioids	22,062	93.8%	6.2%
Muscle Relaxants	12,987	98.5%	1.5%
Topical Analgesics	11,990	95.5%	4.5%
NSAIDs	7,690	87.4%	12.6%
Anti-Epilepsy Drugs	7,312	91.2%	8.8%
Sedative-Hypnotics	4,242	95.2%	4.8%
Antiulcer Agents	2,664	90.2%	9.8%
Antidepressants	1,994	81.5%	18.5%
Benzodiazepines	1,402	97.4%	2.6%
Anti-infective Agents	1,289	95.4%	4.6%
Laxatives	1,139	88.5%	11.5%
Others	6,161	91.7%	8.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>80,932</b>	<b>93.5%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>

### *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 the Low Back Disorders chapter, and adopted new guidelines for diagnosing and treating occupational anxiety disorders and workplace COVID-19.

**Table 13. Current California MTUS-ACOEM Treatment Guidelines**

Section/Chapter	MTUS Effective Date
Prevention	October 31, 2019
General Approach to Initial Assessment and Documentation	October 31, 2019
Initial Approaches to Treatment	December 1, 2017
Cornerstones of Disability Prevention and Management	October 31, 2019
Ankle and Foot Disorders	September 21, 2020
Antiemetics	October 6, 2020
Cervical and Thoracic Spine	April 19, 2019
Chronic Pain	December 1, 2017
COVID-19	June 28, 2021
Elbow Disorders	April 18, 2019
Eye Disorders	December 1, 2017
Hand, Wrist, and Forearm Disorders	April 18, 2019
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	December 1, 2017
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 and Future Directions

A decrease in IMR activity started in 2019, continued into 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic, and continued at a slower rate in 2021. Over the course of the year, the IMRO processed almost 15,000 applications every month, a similar number to those processed in 2020. The number of standard case determinations issued in 2021 (11,402) was almost the same as in 2020 (11,618).

Most of the applications filed (not counting duplicates) were determined to be eligible (93.9%) in both 2020 and 2021. The volume of ineligible applications continued to decrease commiserate 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 UR 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 7.2%, down from 9.5% the previous year. The categories with the highest overturn rate were Behavioral and Mental Health services (15.3%), Programs (12.5%), and Evaluation and Management services. 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 their average rate of overturn decreasing slightly.

More cases are being assigned to reviewers licensed in California. In 2011 expert reviewers licensed in the state evaluated 88% of IMR cases, up from 79% the prior year, and 65% the year before that. At the request of treating physicians, the IMRO focused on matching primary and subspecialty board certifications more closely to the treatments in dispute. The proportion of cases reviewed by physicians with board certifications in Occupational Medicine, Pain Medicine, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation and Emergency Medicine was similar to last year, and account for more than three of every four reviews. The DWC meets regularly with the IMRO to address any concerns and to work on continuously improving the IMR process.

## Appendices

### Appendix A1. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Opioid Analgesics

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Hydrocodone (incl. ER)	2,928	2,725	93%	203	7%
NORCO	7,346	6,809	93%	537	7%
Oxycodone (incl. ER)	1,584	1,481	93%	103	7%
PERCOCET	1,766	1,630	92%	136	8%
Tramadol (incl. ER)	4,330	4,184	97%	146	3%
TYLENOL with Codeine	789	766	97%	23	3%
Other opioid analgesics	3,319	3,104	94%	215	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,062</b>	<b>20,699</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>1,363</b>	<b>6%</b>

### Appendix A2. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Skeletal Muscle Relaxants

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Baclofen	1,509	1,494	99%	15	1%
Cyclobenzaprine (incl. ER)	3,717	3,666	99%	51	1%
FLEXERIL	2,019	1,987	98%	32	2%
Methocarbamol	667	656	98%	11	2%
ROBAXIN	602	589	98%	13	2%
SOMA	518	517	>99%	1	<1%
Tizanidine	2,262	2,216	98%	46	2%
ZANAFLEX	554	543	98%	11	2%
Other muscle relaxant	1,139	1,125	99%	14	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,987</b>	<b>12,793</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>1%</b>

### Appendix A3. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Topical Analgesics

	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Diclofenac	1,202	1,135	94%	67	6%
Lidocaine	4,315	4,168	97%	147	3%
LIDODERM	877	835	95%	42	5%
LIDOPRO	1,107	1,056	95%	51	5%
Miscellaneous topical non-opioids	694	666	96%	28	4%
VOLTAREN Gel	1,640	1,557	95%	83	5%
Other topical analgesics	2,155	2,033	94%	122	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,990</b>	<b>11,450</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>5%</b>



*Appendix A4. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: NSAIDs*

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
CELEBREX	741	648	87%	93	13%
Diclofenac	1,263	1,162	92%	101	8%
Ibuprofen	1,163	1,001	86%	162	14%
Meloxicam	480	413	86%	67	14%
MOBIC	367	321	87%	46	13%
Naproxen (incl. ER)	1,115	943	85%	172	15%
TYLENOL	334	287	86%	47	14%
Other NSAIDs	2,227	1,943	87%	284	13%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,690</b>	<b>6,718</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>13%</b>

*Appendix A5. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Anticonvulsants*

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Gabapentin (incl. ER)	4,694	4,330	92%	364	8%
LYRICA	986	880	89%	106	11%
NEURONTIN	617	566	92%	51	8%
Pregabalin	440	386	88%	54	12%
Other anticonvulsants	575	503	92%	72	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,312</b>	<b>6,665</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>9%</b>

*Appendix A6. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Sedatives/Hypnotics*

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Ambien (incl. CR)	601	595	99%	6	3%
Moderate Sedation	2,255	2,187	97%	68	3%
Trazadone	486	413	85%	73	15%
Zolpidem (incl. ER)	256	253	99%	3	1%
Other sedatives	644	589	91%	55	9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,242</b>	<b>4,037</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>5%</b>

*Appendix A7. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Antiulcer Agents*

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Lansoprazole	746	668	90%	78	10%
Omeprazole	780	696	89%	84	11%
PREVACID	332	306	92%	26	8%
PRILOSEC	299	268	90%	31	10%
Other antiulcer agents	507	466	92%	41	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,664</b>	<b>2,404</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>10%</b>

*Appendix A8. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Antidepressants*

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Amitriptyline	213	171	80%	42	20%
CYMBALTA	444	392	88%	52	12%
Duloxetine	287	240	84%	47	16%
Nortriptyline	218	178	82%	40	18%
Other antidepressants	832	644	77%	188	23%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,994</b>	<b>1,625</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>19%</b>

*Appendix A9. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Benzodiazepines*

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Alprazolam	162	158	98%	4	2%
Diazepam	159	154	97%	5	3%
VALIUM	179	171	96%	8	4%
XANAX	275	268	97%	7	3%
Other benzodiazepines	627	615	98%	12	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,402</b>	<b>1,366</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>3%</b>

*Appendix A10. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Anti-infective Agents*

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Cephalexin	124	121	98%	3	2%
KEFLEX	691	677	98%	14	2%
Other anti-infective agents	474	432	91%	42	9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,289</b>	<b>1,230</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>5%</b>

*Appendix A11. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Laxatives*

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
COLACE	507	452	89%	55	11%
Docusate	149	128	86%	21	14%
Senna	112	97	87%	15	13%
Other Laxatives	371	331	89%	40	11%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,139</b>	<b>1,008</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>88%</b>

*Appendix A12. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: All Other Drug Classes*

Drug Class	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Antiemetics	844	792	94%	52	6%
Antineoplastic Hormones	655	613	94%	42	6%
Enteral Nutrition	653	643	98%	10	2%
Anesthetics	523	495	95%	28	5%
Antihypertensive Combos	416	345	83%	71	17%
Antimigraine Agents	354	322	91%	32	9%
Analgesics	308	298	97%	10	3%
Adrenal Corticosteroids	210	184	88%	26	12%
Antipsychotics	206	166	81%	40	19%
Lipid Supplements	191	184	96%	7	4%
Opioid Antagonist Agent	179	162	91%	17	9%
Erectile Dysfunction	178	154	87%	24	13%
Gastric Medications	164	148	90%	16	10%
Anticoagulants	141	110	78%	31	22%
Antiasthma Bronchodilators	134	124	93%	10	7%
CNS Stimulants	126	119	94%	7	6%
Investigative Anti-diabetic	102	92	90%	10	10%
Topical Analgesics - OTIC	92	89	97%	3	3%
Gastrointestinal Medications	74	64	86%	10	14%
Cardiovascular Meds.	64	55	86%	9	14%
Alpha blockers	63	52	83%	11	17%
Antispasmodics	55	40	73%	15	27%
Barbituric Acid Derivative	52	52	100%	0	0%
Topical Compounds	52	48	92%	4	8%
Botulinum Toxin	49	46	94%	3	6%
Beta Blockers	35	30	86%	5	14%
Anti-Parkinson Agents	33	30	91%	3	9%
Anabolic Androgens	29	26	90%	3	10%
Cannabinoids	27	26	96%	1	4%
Antihistamines	21	17	81%	4	19%
Other/Unclassified	131	121	92%	10	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,161</b>	<b>5,647</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>8%</b>

*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	237	231	97%	6	3%
Psychiatrist	125	103	82%	22	18%
Psychologist	971	800	82%	171	18%
Other E&M	15	15	100%	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,348</b>	<b>1,149</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>15%</b>

Subcategory: Therapies

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Behavioral Therapy	184	148	80%	36	20%
Biofeedback	189	162	86%	27	14%
Cognitive Therapy	1,303	1,070	82%	233	18%
Hypnotherapy	121	107	88%	14	12%
Other therapies	486	442	91%	44	9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,283</b>	<b>1,929</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>16%</b>

*Appendix B2. Treatment Request Outcomes: Programs*

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Functional Restoration	1,547	1,310	85%	237	15%
Gym Membership	151	151	100%	0	0%
Weight Loss Program	150	129	86%	21	14%
Work Conditioning	301	279	93%	22	7%
Work Hardening	217	202	93%	15	7%
Other programs	115	99	86%	16	14%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,481</b>	<b>2,170</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>13%</b>

*Appendix B3. Treatment Request Outcomes: Diagnostic Testing*

Subcategory: EMG/NCV/NCS

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Electromyography (EMG)	3,420	3,182	93%	238	7%
Nerve Conduction Velocity	691	647	94%	44	6%
Other nerve tests	73	67	92%	6	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,184</b>	<b>3,896</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>7%</b>

Subcategory: Imaging, Radiology

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Arthrogram	223	202	91%	21	9%
Bone Scan	141	127	90%	14	10%
CT Scan	962	869	90%	93	10%
Echocardiogram	400	373	93%	27	7%
Fluoroscopy	359	339	94%	20	6%
MRI	9,651	8,862	92%	789	8%
Ultrasound	2,286	2,192	96%	94	4%
X-Rays	4,003	3,748	94%	255	6%
Other imaging	443	412	93%	31	7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18,468</b>	<b>17,124</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>1,344</b>	<b>7%</b>

Subcategory: Lab and Pathology

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Complete Blood Count	3,681	3,405	93%	276	7%
Metabolic Panel	2,573	2,439	95%	134	5%
Urinalysis	2,442	2,359	97%	83	3%
Urine Drug Screen	2,208	1,863	84%	345	16%
Other lab tests	10,101	9,508	94%	593	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21,005</b>	<b>19,574</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>1,431</b>	<b>7%</b>

Subcategory: Other Diagnostic Tests

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Electrocardiogram (EKG)	3,639	3,398	93%	241	7%
Other tests	1,867	1,730	93%	137	7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,506</b>	<b>5,128</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>7%</b>

*Appendix B4. Treatment Request Outcomes: DMEPOS*

Subcategory: Durable Medical Equipment (DME)

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Continual Passive Motion	401	396	99%	5	1%
Exercise Kit	220	198	90%	22	10%
Hot/Cold Compression	3,217	3,167	98%	50	2%
Traction Unit	176	173	98%	3	2%
Other DME	7,394	6,917	94%	477	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,408</b>	<b>10,851</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>5%</b>

Subcategory: Electrical Stimulation

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
E-stim Supplies	342	335	98%	7	2%
H-Wave Unit	1,422	1,337	94%	85	6%
Interferential Unit	387	371	96%	16	4%
TENS Unit	2,195	2,004	91%	191	9%
Other elec. stimulation	571	545	95%	26	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,917</b>	<b>4,592</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>7%</b>

Subcategory: Prosthetics & Orthotics

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Brace	2,643	2,444	92%	199	8%
Collar	246	243	99%	3	1%
Lumbar Support	258	252	98%	6	2%
Orthotics	515	449	87%	66	13%
Other prosthetics/orthotics	75	45	60%	30	40%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,737</b>	<b>3,433</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>8%</b>

Subcategory: Supplies

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Bone Growth Stimulator	544	515	95%	29	5%
Commodes	354	342	97%	12	3%
Conductive Gel	511	496	97%	15	3%
Crutches	458	414	90%	44	10%
Electrodes	1,478	1,441	97%	37	3%
Hot/Cold Wraps/Pads	348	332	95%	16	5%
Sling	810	712	88%	98	12%
TENS Pads/Patches/Wires	444	411	93%	33	7%
Walker	775	717	93%	58	7%
Other supplies	2,200	2,050	93%	150	7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,922</b>	<b>7,430</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>6%</b>

*Appendix B5. Treatment Request Outcomes: Evaluation and Management*

Subcategory: Dental Services

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Dental Services	704	604	86%	100	14%

Subcategory: Evaluation and Management

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Multidisciplinary Evaluation	532	404	76%	128	24%
Office Visit	967	853	88%	114	12%
Other	111	99	89%	12	11%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,610</b>	<b>1,356</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>16%</b>

Subcategory: Medical Specialties

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Anesthesiology	530	510	96%	20	4%
Consult (unspecified)	1,411	1,270	90%	141	10%
Follow-up	1,276	1,049	82%	227	18%
Medical Clearance	1,994	1,858	93%	136	7%
Orthopedic and Orthopedic Surgery	696	639	92%	57	8%
Pain Management	1,001	890	89%	111	11%
Other	2,062	1,809	88%	253	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,970</b>	<b>8,025</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>945</b>	<b>11%</b>

*Appendix B6. Treatment Request Outcomes: Home Health and Transportation*

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Home Health	1,364	1,279	94%	85	6%
Transportation	377	353	94%	24	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,741</b>	<b>1,632</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>6%</b>

*Appendix B7. Treatment Request Outcomes: Injections*

Subcategory: Peripheral

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Botox	191	174	91%	17	9%
Corticosteroid/Steroid	232	204	88%	28	12%
Injection–Ankle	208	193	93%	15	7%
Injection–Elbow	441	407	92%	34	8%
Injection–Foot	135	126	93%	9	7%
Injection–Hand/Finger	107	94	88%	13	12%
Injection–Hip	286	253	88%	33	12%
Injection–Knee	1,579	1,470	93%	109	7%
Injection–Shoulder	1,264	1,131	89%	133	11%
Injection–Wrist	243	209	86%	34	14%
Nerve Block	1,042	972	93%	70	7%
PRP	932	920	99%	12	1%
Synvisc	159	151	95%	8	5%
Trigger Point	1,637	1,560	95%	77	5%
Viscosupplementation	120	113	94%	7	6%
Other peripheral	7	7	100%	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,583</b>	<b>7,984</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>599</b>	<b>7%</b>

Subcategory: Spine

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Causal Epidural	283	281	99%	2	1%
Cervical Injection	1,001	983	98%	18	2%
Epidural	2,621	2,558	98%	63	2%
Facet	1,072	1,046	98%	26	2%
Lumbar Epidural Steroid Injection	1,957	1,887	96%	70	4%
Lumbar Injection (non-ster.)	578	549	95%	29	5%
Medial Block Branch	1,990	1,883	95%	107	5%
Sacroiliac	743	721	97%	22	3%
Transforaminal Injection	1,616	1,560	97%	56	3%
Other spine surgery	35	35	100%	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,896</b>	<b>11,503</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>3%</b>

Subcategory: Other Injections

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Other injections	1,388	1,286	93%	102	7%



*Appendix B8. Treatment Request Outcomes: Rehabilitation*

Subcategory: Acupuncture

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Acupuncture	8,939	8,101	91%	838	9%

Subcategory: Chiropractic

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Manual Manipulation	523	476	91%	47	9%
Other chiropractic	5,042	4,524	90%	518	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,565</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>10%</b>

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

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Active and Passive Modalities, PT and/or OT	8,729	8,153	93%	577	7%
Occupational Therapy	2,023	1,896	94%	127	6%
Physical Therapy	16,845	15,615	93%	1,230	7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27,598</b>	<b>25,664</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>1,934</b>	<b>7%</b>

Subcategory: Other Rehabilitation

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Aqua Therapy	1,356	1,278	94%	78	6%
Cold/Cryotherapy	372	363	98%	9	2%
Compression Therapy	140	136	97%	4	3%
Functional Capacity Test	652	598	92%	54	8%
Hand Therapy	252	232	92%	20	8%
Massage Therapy	2,630	2,386	91%	244	9%
Other Therapies	1,919	1,796	94%	123	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,321</b>	<b>6,789</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>7%</b>

*Appendix B9. Treatment Request Outcomes: Surgery*

Subcategory: Adjunct Surgical Services

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Assistant Surgeon	1,878	1,762	94%	116	6%
Inpatient Stay	1,564	1,470	94%	94	6%
Other adjunct surgical	1,289	1,239	96%	50	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,731</b>	<b>4,471</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>5%</b>

Subcategory: Arthroscopic Surgery

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Arthroscopy	708	623	88%	85	12%
Surgery–Ankle	225	193	86%	32	14%
Surgery–Elbow	268	240	90%	28	10%
Surgery–Hip	85	72	85%	13	15%
Surgery–Knee	905	818	90%	87	10%
Surgery–Shoulder	1,290	1139	88%	151	12%
Surgery–Wrist	251	215	86%	36	14%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,732</b>	<b>3,300</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>12%</b>

Subcategory: Non-arthroscopic Surgery

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Arthroplasty	170	140	82%	30	18%
Carpel Tunnel	625	524	84%	101	16%
Discectomy	270	258	96%	12	4%
Fusion	1,104	1,070	97%	34	3%
Knee Replace/Revision	197	171	87%	26	13%
Laminectomy	240	233	97%	7	3%
Radiofrequency Ablation	772	691	90%	81	10%
Rhizotomy	134	128	96%	6	4%
Shoulder Surgery	138	121	88%	17	12%
Spinal Cord Stimulator	529	510	96%	19	4%
Spine Surgery	268	249	93%	19	7%
Other surgery	685	561	82%	124	18%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,132</b>	<b>4,656</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>9%</b>

Subcategory: Surgical Consult

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Preoperative Clearance	1,825	1,735	95%	90	5%
Other surgical consult	270	254	95%	16	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,095</b>	<b>1,989</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>5%</b>

*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