

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

2020 Independent Medical Review (IMR) Report: Analysis of 2019 Data

**CALIFORNIA LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
(LWDA)**

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Executive Summary

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

In 2019, the Independent Medical Review Organization (IMRO) processed 222,236 applications, a 12% decrease from 2018. Of these 222,236, 45,032 were found to be duplicate applications, and 11,594 were determined to be ineligible. Concurrently, the IMRO issued 163,755 IMR final determinations, 11% 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 seven to eight days.

Overall, the IMRO overturned 10.4% of the utilization review (UR) decisions that denied treatment requests made by physicians treating injured workers. This rate of overturn is similar to the previous year (10.3%). As in previous years, substantially similar rates of overturned cases occurred in all geographic regions in which injured workers reside.

Pharmaceutical requests encompass 37% of the issues in dispute. (In previous years, pharmaceutical requests accounted for at least 40% of the disputed medical treatments.) Opioid analgesics comprise 32% of the drug requests. The 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 17% of the issues.

The treatment request denials that were overturned most often were for behavioral and mental health service (22% overturned), evaluation and management services, which include specialist consultations and dental service (17% overturned), and programs, such as functional restoration programs and gym memberships (16% overturned). The requests with the fewest overturned UR denials were in the categories of DMEPOS (durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, & supplies) and home health & transportation. In each category, less than 9% of request denials were 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. In September 2019, the Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) launched an updated free online education module available to all medical providers promoting the application of the MTUS and evidence-based medicine for California's injured workers.

Introduction

In September 2012, Governor Brown signed into legislation SB 863. This reform of the workers' compensation system in California included IMR, 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 appropriateness of medical treatment recommended by physicians for injured workers but denied or modified in the UR process ([UR information](#)). The expert reviewers follow the guidance of the 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 seventh 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 publicly available on the DWC 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 2019 IMR Data

The IMRO provides the DWC with case and treatment data for all completed case decisions, which includes 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.

All treatment requests for cases issued in 2019 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 Code of the IMR application as listed in the case file. The ZIP Code was 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.)

Program Enhancements in 2019

In September 2019, DWC updated the Online Physician Education Module on the MTUS, which had been originally released in October 2016.

Physicians treating in the California workers' compensation system are required to follow the evidence-based recommendations in the DWC MTUS. The course provides helpful instruction on the following topics:

- What the MTUS is, how to use it, and how you may be able to obtain free online access to the MTUS-ACOEM treatment guidelines;
- How to navigate the Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule–American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine treatment guidelines and apply recommendations for patient care;
- The function of the MTUS Drug Formulary;
- When to consider recommendations outside the MTUS guidelines for the care of your patient; and
- The role of UR and IMR physicians.

Findings

Applications

In 2019, the IMRO received a total of **222,236** IMR applications, 12% fewer than the previous year (252,565). As in previous years, over one in five applications (20.3%) duplicated an application previously received. After duplicate applications were subtracted, the number of “unique” applications received was **177,204**, the fewest since Calendar Year (CY) 2014 (171,704).

After an application is determined not to be a duplicate, it is screened for eligibility. In 2019, **165,610** eligible applications were processed by the IMRO, a monthly average of 13,801. In the previous year, a monthly average of 15,482 eligible applications was processed by the IMRO.

Table 1. IMR Applications by Calendar Year (CY), 2013 to 2019

Calendar Year	Total Number of Applications Filed	Total Number of Unique Applications	Total Number of Applications Deemed Eligible
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	1,538,395	1,201,467	1,059,592

Table 2. IMR Applications by Month, 2019

Month	Total Number of Applications Filed	Total Number of Unique Applications	Total Number of Applications Deemed Eligible
January	18,729	14,792	13,748
February	18,093	14,555	13,638
March	19,262	15,478	14,582
April	20,052	16,052	15,095
May	19,886	15,788	14,815
June	17,696	14,177	13,279
July	19,813	15,508	14,507
August	18,306	14,679	13,690
September	17,640	13,686	12,824
October	19,243	15,646	14,534
November	16,534	13,265	12,320
December	16,982	13,578	12,578
TOTAL	222,236	177,204	165,610

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)

Over the past several years of the IMR program, applications determined to be ineligible have decreased as a percentage of overall “unique” applications and volume.

Table 3. Ineligible Applications as Percentage of Unique Filings, CY 2013 to CY 2019

Calendar Year	Total Number of Unique Applications	Total Number of Ineligible Applications	Percent of Applications Deemed Ineligible
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	1,201,467	141,825	11.8%

Table 4. Reasons for Ineligibility, 2019

Category	Total	Percent
No Signature on Application	802	6.9%
Untimely Filing	2,754	23.8%
No UR Report Attached	3,236	27.9%
No Signature and No UR Report	153	1.3%
Conditional Non-certification (CNC)*	3,191	27.5%
Other	1,458	12.6%
TOTAL	11,594	100.0%

*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 within 72 hours. Of the 163,698 *standard* IMR decisions issued in 2019, nearly all (99.6%) were issued within 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, from seven to eight days.

Table 5. Average Number of Days to Complete Standard IMRs, 2019

Month	Total Number of Standard Final Decisions Issued	Average Age from Assigned Date	Average Age from Complete Medical Records
January	15,282	26	8
February	11,993	24	8
March	13,883	24	8
April	15,367	24	8
May	15,013	24	7
June	13,856	23	7
July	13,334	24	7
August	14,318	24	7
September	12,301	23	7
October	13,853	24	7
November	11,597	24	8
December	12,901	26	8

"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.

In 2019, 57 expedited cases were decided. The average length of time from receipt of application 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))

Final Determinations Issues: Standard Case Decisions

The IMRO issued **163,698** standard determinations in 2019, which is an 11.4% decrease in volume of decisions over the previous year (184,672). This decrease corresponds accordingly with the 12% decrease in annual IMR application filings. The IMRO issued an average of 13,642 each month in the calendar year. As in previous years, approximately one-third of the case decisions in 2019 contained only pharmacy-related treatment requests and thus were eligible for the lower application fee of \$345, instead of the \$390 standard application fee.

As of January 1, 2020, the cost was set at \$345 for all completed IMR cases, including expedited cases.

Table 6. Standard IMR Final Determinations Issued, CY 2013 to CY 2019

Calendar Year	Total Number of FDLs Issued
2019	163,698
2018	184,672
2017	172,145
2016	175,960
2015	165,496
2014	143,840
2013	3,682
TOTAL	1,009,493

Geographic Region of the Injured Worker

The number of IMR case decisions issued in 2019 continues to be proportionate to the number of cases filed in the ten geographic regions. As in the past several years, case decision outcomes were consistent across all geographic regions.

Table 7. Case Outcomes by Geographic Region of the Injured Worker, 2019

Geographic Region	Number of Case Decisions Issued	Percent of Case Decisions Upheld	Percentage of Case Decisions Partially Overturned	Percentage of Case Decisions Overturned
Bay Area	33,071	83.4%	4.8%	11.8%
Central Coast	12,772	83.2%	5.5%	11.3%
Central Valley	21,216	84.6%	5.1%	10.4%
Eastern Sierra Foothills	3,572	84.2%	4.8%	11.1%
Inland Empire	29,443	84.8%	5.7%	9.5%
Los Angeles	37,470	85.5%	5.5%	9.0%
North State–Shasta	2,108	86.3%	4.5%	9.3%
Sacramento Valley–North	2,527	83.1%	5.4%	11.6%
Sacramento Valley–South	8,095	82.6%	5.3%	12.0%
San Diego	10,033	81.4%	5.2%	13.4%
Other/Out-of-State	3,448	86.5%	4.4%	9.1%
TOTAL	163,755	84.2%	5.3%	10.5%

Note: Percentages might not total 100.0% due to rounding.

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

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

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

Physician Reviewers

Expert reviewers may hold licenses to practice in any of the 50 states. Reviewers licensed in California evaluated 65% of the decisions in 2019, a higher proportion than the previous year, when reviewers licensed in the state evaluated 62% of the decisions.

Although expert reviews 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 is knowledgeable and is qualified to review the requested treatment. Reviewers with five common specialties completed three of every four case decisions.

Table 8. IMR Expert Reviewers by Board Certification/Relevant Specialty, 2019

<i>Board Certification</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Occupational Medicine	41,394	25.3%
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation	25,721	15.7%
Family Practice	24,262	14.8%
Orthopedic Surgery	15,770	9.6%
Emergency Medicine	15,364	9.4%
Pain Management	13,329	8.1%
Internal Medicine	11,439	7.0%
Preventive Medicine	3,871	2.4%
Chiropractic	2,707	1.7%
Neurological Surgery	2,016	1.2%
Psychology	1,902	1.2%
Psychiatry	1,714	1.0%
Anesthesiology	1,472	0.9%
Oriental Medicine	960	0.6%
Surgery	598	0.4%
Podiatrist	243	0.1%
Plastic Surgery	215	0.1%
Dentist	195	0.1%
Ophthalmology	117	0.1%
Neurology	101	0.1%
Other/Not Listed	365	0.2%
TOTAL	163,755	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 2019, 319,505 treatment request decisions were made in the 163,755 decided cases. Overall, 10.4% 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. After the establishment of the MTUS drug formulary in 2018, the proportion of these requests has decreased, compared with the total number of requests received.

Table 9. Outcomes for All Treatment Requests, CY 2013 to CY 2019

Calendar Year	Total Number of Treatment Requests	UR Decision Upheld	UR Decision Overturned
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, 2019

Service Category	Number of Treatment Requests	UR Decision Upheld	UR Decision Overturned
Behavioral & Mental Health Services	3,537	77.7%	22.3%
Diagnostic Testing	54,296	89.9%	10.1%
Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics & Supplies (DMEPOS)	29,669	91.7%	8.3%
Evaluation & Management	13,282	82.5%	17.5%
Home Health & Transportation	2,206	91.2%	8.8%
Injections	23,929	88.6%	11.4%
Pharmaceuticals	117,176	89.9%	10.1%
Programs	3,018	84.0%	16.0%
Rehabilitation	54,704	90.5%	9.5%
Surgeries	17,688	90.8%	9.2%
TOTAL	319,505	89.6%	10.4%

Table 11. Treatment Requests by Category and Percentage of Total, CY 2018 vs. CY 2019

Service Category	Total Treatment Requests CY 2018	Percent of CY 2018 Total	Total Treatment Requests CY 2019	Percent of CY 2019 Total
Behavioral & Mental Health Services	3,995	1.1%	3,537	1.1%
Diagnostic Testing	58,558	16.3%	54,296	17.0%
Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotics & Supplies (DMEPOS)	30,724	8.5%	29,669	9.3%
Evaluation & Management	14,389	4.0%	13,282	4.2%
Home Health & Transportation	2,390	0.7%	2,206	0.7%
Injections	25,626	7.1%	23,929	7.5%
Pharmaceuticals	150,241	41.7%	117,176	36.7%
Programs	3,497	1.0%	3,018	0.9%
Rehabilitation	52,967	14.7%	54,704	17.1%
Surgeries	17,737	4.9%	17,688	5.5%
TOTAL	360,124	100.0%	319,505	100.0%

Table 12. Treatment Requests for Pharmaceuticals by Drug Class, CY 2019

Service Category	Number of Treatment Requests	Percent of Total
Opioid Analgesics	37,359	31.9%
Skeletal Muscle Relaxants	16,825	14.4%
Topical Analgesics	14,415	12.3%
Anticonvulsants	9,395	8.0%
Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)	9,029	7.7%
Sedatives/Hypnotics	6,343	5.4%
Antidepressants	4,621	3.9%
Antiulcer Agents	3,204	2.7%
Benzodiazepines	2,649	2.3%
Anti-Infective agents	1,522	1.3%
All Other Drug Classes	11,814	10.1%
TOTAL	117,176	100.0%

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 treatment recommendations.

The current MTUS adopts and incorporates by reference the treatment guidelines of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM). In 2019, 71.3% of IMR treatment request decisions (227,931) were based on recommendations within the MTUS Treatment Guidelines, while 28.7% (91,574) were based on recommendations solely outside the MTUS Treatment Guidelines.

Table 13. Current California MTUS-ACOEM Treatment Guidelines

Section/Chapter	Effective Date
Prevention	May 1, 2011
General Approach to Initial Assessment and Documentation	July 25, 2016
Initial Approaches to Treatment	June 30, 2017
Cornerstones of Disability Prevention and Management	May 1, 2011
Ankle and Foot Disorders	July 16, 2018
Cervical and Thoracic Spine	October 17, 2018
Chronic Pain	May 15, 2017
Elbow Disorders	April 1, 2017
Hand, Wrist, and Forearm Disorders	January 7, 2019
Hip and Groin Disorders	May 1, 2011
Interstitial Lung Disease	January 4, 2016
Knee Disorders	October 28, 2015
Low Back Disorders	March 7, 2019
Occupational Work-Related Asthma	January 4, 2016
Opioids	April 20, 2017
Shoulder Disorders	August 1, 2016
Traumatic Brain Injury	November 15, 2017
Workplace Mental Health: Introduction	March 13, 2019
Workplace Mental Health: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder	December 18, 2018

Conclusion and Future Directions

Activity for IMR declined slightly in its seventh year, though the volume of applications filed remains above 220,000 for the twelve-month period, as it has every year since 2014 (the first full year in which IMR was open to all injured workers). Also, this was the fifth straight year in which over 160,000 case decisions were issued.

Most of the applications filed (not counting duplicates) are determined to be eligible. The number of ineligible applications continues to decrease both in volume and as a percentage of the unique applications. Lack of an attached UR report is the most common reason for an application to be deemed ineligible.

Over 99% of the standard cases are decided within the statutory time requirements. Throughout the year, reviews were completed within seven to eight days of the IMRO's receipt of the medical records, on average.

The average rate of overturn for treatment request denials increased to 10.4% in 2019, a slight increase from 10.3% in 2018. Fewer requests for pharmaceutical denials were reviewed in 2019 (37% of the service categories) compared with 2018 (42%).

In 2020, the DWC will continue to update the MTUS guidelines and formulary to ensure that the recommendations adhere to the most current evidence-based medicine guidance.

Appendices

Appendix A1. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Opioid Analgesics

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
BELBUCA	209	185	88.5%	24	11.5%
Codeine/Acetaminophen	481	441	91.7%	40	8.3%
DILAUDID	303	266	87.8%	37	12.2%
Hydrocodone (incl. ER)	4,076	3,669	90.0%	407	10.0%
Methadone	378	339	89.7%	39	10.3%
Morphine (incl. ER)	778	687	88.3%	91	11.7%
MS-CONTIN (incl. ER)	568	515	90.7%	53	9.3%
NARCAN	557	449	80.6%	108	19.4%
NORCO	12,548	11,397	90.8%	1,151	9.2%
NUCYNTA	408	358	87.7%	50	12.3%
Oxycodone (incl. OxyIR)	2,700	2,425	89.8%	275	10.2%
OXYCONTIN	733	662	90.3%	71	9.7%
PERCOCET	2,715	2,477	91.2%	238	8.8%
Tramadol (incl. ER)	6,984	6,509	93.2%	475	6.8%
TYLENOL with Codeine	1,340	1,251	93.4%	89	6.6%
ULTRACET	353	327	92.6%	26	7.4%
ULTRAM (incl. ER)	768	710	92.4%	58	7.6%
Other opioid	1,460	1,304	89.3%	156	10.7%
TOTAL	37,359	33,971	90.9%	3,388	9.1%

Appendix A2. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Skeletal Muscle Relaxants

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Baclofen	1,710	1,628	95.2%	82	4.8%
Carisprodol	333	332	99.7%	1	0.3%
Cyclobenzaprine (incl. ER)	4,541	4,352	95.8%	189	4.2%
FEXMID	294	287	97.6%	7	2.4%
FLEXERIL	3,330	3,174	95.3%	156	4.7%
Methocarbamol	493	462	93.7%	31	6.3%
NORFLEX	239	232	97.1%	7	2.9%
Orphenadrine	200	193	96.5%	7	3.5%
ROBAXIN	742	707	95.3%	35	4.7%
SOMA	1,107	1,098	99.2%	9	0.8%
Tizanidine	2,328	2,192	94.2%	136	5.8%
ZANAFLEX	916	862	94.1%	54	5.9%
Other muscle relaxant	592	568	95.9%	24	4.1%
TOTAL	16,825	16,087	95.6%	738	4.4%

Appendix A3. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Topical Analgesics

	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Buprenorphine	282	254	90.1%	28	9.9%
BUTRANS	402	359	89.3%	43	10.7%
Capsaicin	211	188	89.1%	23	10.9%
Diclofenac	1,140	1,035	90.8%	105	9.2%
Fentanyl	329	291	88.4%	38	11.6%
FLECTOR	712	672	94.4%	40	5.6%
Lidocaine	3,946	3,748	95.0%	198	5.0%
LIDODERM	1,437	1,352	94.1%	85	5.9%
LIDOPRO	1,636	1,594	97.4%	42	2.6%
Miscellaneous topical non-opioids	1,069	1,020	95.4%	49	4.6%
TEROCIN	337	326	96.7%	11	3.3%
VOLTAREN Gel	1,800	1,628	90.4%	172	9.6%
Other topical analgesics	1,114	1,040	93.4%	74	6.6%
Total	14,415	13,507	93.7%	908	6.3%

Appendix A4. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: NSAIDs

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Aspirin	174	150	86.2%	24	13.8%
CELEBREX	947	844	89.1%	103	10.9%
Celecoxib	344	287	83.4%	57	16.6%
Diclofenac	1,112	1,002	90.1%	110	9.9%
Fenoprofen	166	137	82.5%	29	17.5%
Flurbiprofen	175	152	86.9%	23	13.1%
Ibuprofen	1,367	1,054	77.1%	313	22.9%
Meloxicam	395	336	85.1%	59	14.9%
MOBIC	411	339	82.5%	72	17.5%
MOTRIN	272	229	84.2%	43	15.8%
NAPROSYN	338	268	79.3%	70	20.7%
Naproxen (incl. ER)	1,607	1,311	81.6%	296	18.4%
TORADOL	272	245	90.1%	27	9.9%
TYLENOL	274	224	81.8%	50	18.2%
VOLTAREN (incl. XR)	195	168	86.2%	27	13.8%
Other NSAIDs	980	816	83.3%	164	16.7%
TOTAL	9,029	7,562	83.8%	1,467	16.2%

Appendix A5. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Anticonvulsants

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Gabapentin (incl. ER)	5,375	4,386	81.6%	989	18.4%
LYRICA	1,736	1,410	81.2%	326	18.8%
NEURONTIN	1,106	927	83.8%	179	16.2%
TOPAMAX	314	256	81.5%	58	18.5%
Topiramate	230	185	80.4%	45	19.6%
Other anticonvulsants	634	507	80.0%	127	20.0%
TOTAL	9,395	7,671	81.6%	1,724	18.4%

Appendix A6. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Sedatives/Hypnotics

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Ambien (incl. CR)	1,104	1,092	98.9%	12	1.1%
LUNESTA	379	369	97.4%	10	2.6%
Moderate Sedation	2,391	2,255	94.3%	136	5.7%
Trazadone	967	776	80.2%	191	19.8%
Zolpidem (incl. ER)	535	527	98.5%	8	1.5%
Other sedatives	967	820	84.8%	147	15.2%
TOTAL	6,343	5,839	92.1%	504	7.9%

Appendix A7. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Antidepressants

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Amitriptyline	412	308	74.8%	104	25.2%
CYMBALTA	979	789	80.6%	190	19.4%
Duloxetine	570	415	72.8%	155	27.2%
Nortriptyline	396	265	66.9%	131	33.1%
WELLBUTRIN	237	174	73.4%	63	26.6%
Other antidepressants	2,027	1,450	71.5%	577	28.5%
TOTAL	4,621	3,401	73.6%	1,220	26.4%

Appendix A8. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Antiulcer Agents

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Lansoprazole	712	632	88.8%	80	11.2%
Omeprazole	1,011	896	88.6%	115	11.4%
PREVACID	280	261	93.2%	19	6.8%
PRILOSEC	413	364	88.1%	49	11.9%
Other antiulcer agents	788	692	87.8%	96	12.2%
TOTAL	3,204	2,845	88.8%	359	11.2%

Appendix A9. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Benzodiazepines

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Alprazolam	326	319	97.9%	7	2.1%
ATIVAN	285	276	96.8%	9	3.2%
Clonazepam	224	214	95.5%	10	4.5%
Diazepam	265	253	95.5%	12	4.5%
Lorazepam	263	254	96.6%	9	3.4%
VALIUM	273	260	95.2%	13	4.8%
XANAX	473	461	97.5%	12	2.5%
Other benzodiazepines	540	524	97.0%	16	3.0%
TOTAL	2,649	2,561	96.7%	88	3.3%

Appendix A10. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: Anti-infective Agents

Drug Name	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Cephalexin	135	125	92.6%	10	7.4%
KEFLEX	796	779	97.9%	17	2.1%
Other anti-infective agents	591	546	92.4%	45	7.6%
TOTAL	1,522	1,450	95.3%	72	4.7%

Appendix A11. Pharmacy Request Outcomes: All Other Drug Classes

Drug Class	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Laxatives	1,475	1,246	84.5%	229	15.5%
Antiemetics	1,349	1,240	91.9%	109	8.1%
Gastric Medications	934	818	87.6%	116	12.4%
Antineoplastic Hormones	904	815	90.2%	89	9.8%
Enteral Nutrition	710	662	93.2%	48	6.8%
Lipid Supplements	628	590	93.9%	38	6.1%
Topical Analgesics - OTIC	603	572	94.9%	31	5.1%
Antihypertensive Combos	584	448	76.7%	136	23.3%
Antipsychotics	538	459	85.3%	79	14.7%
Adrenal Corticosteroids	425	360	84.7%	65	15.3%
Anesthetics	420	388	92.4%	32	7.6%
Analgesics	402	385	95.8%	17	4.2%
Antimigraine Agents	359	298	83.0%	61	17.0%
Opioid Antagonist Agent	311	272	87.5%	39	12.5%
Erectile Dysfunction	272	231	84.9%	41	15.1%
CNS Stimulants	229	218	95.2%	11	4.8%
Topical Compounds	197	188	95.4%	9	4.6%
Anticoagulants	172	152	88.4%	20	11.6%
Antiasthma Bronchodilators	166	133	80.1%	33	19.9%
Gastrointestinal Medications	161	137	85.1%	24	14.9%
Investigative Anti-diabetic	132	99	75.0%	33	25.0%
Botulinum Toxin	105	88	83.8%	17	16.2%
Cardiovascular Meds.	105	83	79.0%	22	21.0%
Alpha blockers	84	68	81.0%	16	19.0%
Antihistamines	73	70	95.9%	3	4.1%
Anabolic Androgens	65	51	78.5%	14	21.5%
Antispasmodics	63	46	73.0%	17	27.0%
Cannabinoids	54	54	100.0%	0	0.0%
Anti-Parkinson Agents	53	41	77.4%	12	22.6%
Barbituric Acid Derivative	33	32	97.0%	1	3.0%
Beta Blockers	29	20	69.0%	9	31.0%
Diuretics	29	22	75.9%	7	24.1%
Other/Unclassified	150	133	88.7%	17	11.3%
TOTAL	11,814	10,419	88.2%	1,395	11.8%

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	272	249	91.5%	23	8.5%
Psychiatrist	178	119	66.9%	59	33.1%
Psychologist	1,255	967	77.1%	288	22.9%
TOTAL	1,705	1,335	78.3%	370	21.7%

Subcategory: Therapies

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Behavioral Therapies	109	81	74.3%	28	25.7%
Biofeedback	208	175	84.1%	33	15.9%
Cognitive Therapy	1,084	808	74.5%	276	25.5%
Hypnotherapy	82	70	85.4%	12	14.6%
Other therapies	349	279	79.9%	70	20.1%
TOTAL	1,832	1,413	77.1%	419	22.9%

Appendix B2. Treatment Request Outcomes: Programs

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Functional Restoration	1,629	1,277	78.4%	352	21.6%
Gym Membership	525	511	97.3%	14	2.7%
Weight Loss Program	235	202	86.0%	33	14.0%
Work Conditioning	306	270	88.2%	36	11.8%
Work Hardening	188	168	89.4%	20	10.6%
Other programs	135	108	80.0%	27	20.0%
TOTAL	3,018	2,536	84.0%	482	16.0%

Appendix B3. Treatment Request Outcomes: Diagnostic Testing

Subcategory: EMG/NCV/NCS

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Electromyography (EMG)	4,139	3,494	84.4%	645	15.6%
Nerve Conduction Velocity	1,462	1,262	86.3%	200	13.7%
Other nerve tests	190	163	85.8%	27	14.2%
TOTAL	5,791	4,919	84.9%	872	15.1%

Subcategory: Imaging, Radiology

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Arthrogram	295	217	73.6%	78	26.4%
Bone Scan	190	169	88.9%	21	11.1%
CT Scan	1,210	1,031	85.2%	179	14.8%
Echocardiogram	412	392	95.1%	20	4.9%
Fluoroscopy	545	512	93.9%	33	6.1%
MRI	11,524	9,999	86.8%	1,525	13.2%
Ultrasound	2,363	2,184	92.4%	179	7.6%
X-Rays	4,244	3,873	91.3%	371	8.7%
Other imaging	366	330	90.2%	36	9.8%
TOTAL	21,149	18,707	88.5%	2,442	11.5%

Subcategory: Lab and Pathology

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Complete Blood Count	3,961	3,725	94.0%	236	6.0%
Metabolic Panel	2,579	2,416	93.7%	163	6.3%
Urinalysis	2,551	2,406	94.3%	145	5.7%
Urine Drug Screen	3,457	2,737	79.2%	720	20.8%
Other lab tests	8,569	8,094	94.5%	475	5.5%
TOTAL	21,117	19,378	91.8%	1,739	8.2%

Subcategory: Other Diagnostic Tests

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Electrocardiogram (EKG)	4,092	3,882	94.9%	210	5.1%
Other tests	2,146	1,945	90.6%	201	9.4%
TOTAL	6,238	5,827	93.4%	411	6.6%

Appendix B4. Treatment Request Outcomes: DMEPOS

Subcategory: Durable Medical Equipment (DME)

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Bed	147	137	93.2%	10	6.8%
Continual Passive Motion	499	475	95.2%	24	4.8%
Exercise Kit	187	159	85.0%	28	15.0%
Hot/Cold Compression	2,585	2,474	95.7%	111	4.3%
Traction Unit	194	180	92.8%	14	7.2%
Other DME	8,242	7,572	91.9%	670	8.1%
TOTAL	11,854	10,997	92.8%	857	7.2%

Subcategory: Electrical Stimulation

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
E-stim Supplies	1,150	1,036	90.1%	114	9.9%
H-Wave Unit	1,511	1,350	89.3%	161	10.7%
Interferential Unit	542	533	98.3%	9	1.7%
TENS Unit	2,692	2,383	88.5%	309	11.5%
Other elec. stimulation	839	808	96.3%	31	3.7%
TOTAL	6,734	6,110	90.7%	624	9.3%

Subcategory: Prosthetics & Orthotics

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Brace	3,113	2,819	90.6%	294	9.4%
Collar	317	305	96.2%	12	3.8%
Lumbar Support	386	364	94.3%	22	5.7%
Orthotics	579	485	83.8%	94	16.2%
Other prosthetics/orthotics	110	85	77.3%	25	22.7%
TOTAL	4,505	4,058	90.1%	447	9.9%

Subcategory: Supplies

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Bone Growth Stimulator	587	548	93.4%	39	6.6%
Commodos	400	384	96.0%	16	4.0%
Crutches	587	544	92.7%	43	7.3%
Electrodes	1,169	1,083	92.6%	86	7.4%
Sling	902	819	90.8%	83	9.2%
Walker	822	751	91.4%	71	8.6%
Other supplies	2,109	1,916	90.8%	193	9.2%
TOTAL	6,576	6,045	91.9%	531	8.1%

Appendix B5. Treatment Request Outcomes: Evaluation and Management

Subcategory: Dental Services

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Dental Services	708	560	79.1%	148	20.9%

Subcategory: Evaluation and Management

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Multidisciplinary Evaluation	292	203	69.5%	89	30.5%
Office Visit	1,284	1,065	82.9%	219	17.1%
Other	189	147	77.8%	42	22.2%
TOTAL	1,765	1,415	80.2%	350	19.8%

Subcategory: Medical Specialties

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Anesthesiology	705	661	93.8%	44	6.2%
Consult (unspecified)	1,386	1,115	80.4%	271	19.6%
Follow-up	1,404	1,038	73.9%	366	26.1%
Medical Clearance	1,993	1,862	93.4%	131	6.6%
Neurology and Neurological Surgery	293	233	79.5%	60	20.5%
Orthopedic and Orthopedic Surgery	689	535	77.6%	154	22.4%
Pain Management	1,369	1,048	76.6%	321	23.4%
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	960	874	91.0%	86	9.0%
Psychiatry	157	124	79.0%	33	21.0%
Sleep Evaluation	170	162	95.3%	8	4.7%
Surgery/Surgical Consult	348	279	80.2%	69	19.8%
Other	1,335	1,055	79.0%	280	21.0%
TOTAL	10,809	8,986	83.1%	1,823	16.9%

Appendix B6. Treatment Request Outcomes: Home Health and Transportation

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Home Health	1,691	1,540	91.1%	151	8.9%
Transportation	515	472	91.7%	43	8.3%
TOTAL	2,206	2,012	91.2%	194	8.8%

Appendix B7. Injections

Subcategory: Peripheral

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Botox	202	174	86.1%	28	13.9%
Corticosteroid/Steroid	359	292	81.3%	67	18.7%
Injection–Ankle	175	159	90.9%	16	9.1%
Injection–Elbow	321	262	81.6%	59	18.4%
Injection–Foot	109	93	85.3%	16	14.7%
Injection–Hand	75	60	80.0%	15	20.0%
Injection–Hip	258	200	77.5%	58	22.5%
Injection–Knee	1,334	1,169	87.6%	165	12.4%
Injection–Shoulder	1,077	897	83.3%	180	16.7%
Injection–Wrist	189	138	73.0%	51	27.0%
Nerve Block	1,151	978	85.0%	173	15.0%
PRP	1,212	1,150	94.9%	62	5.1%
Synvisc	361	333	92.2%	28	7.8%
Trigger Point	1,913	1,674	87.5%	239	12.5%
Viscosupplementation	166	154	92.8%	12	7.2%
Other peripheral	29	28	96.6%	1	3.4%
TOTAL	8,931	7,761	86.9%	1,170	13.1%

Subcategory: Spine

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Causal Epidural	323	288	89.2%	35	10.8%
Cervical Injection	810	738	91.1%	72	8.9%
Epidural	3,349	3,051	91.1%	298	8.9%
Facet	1,366	1,240	90.8%	126	9.2%
Lumbar Epidural Steroid Injection	2,283	1,975	86.5%	308	13.5%
Lumbar Injection Non-ster.	336	298	88.7%	38	11.3%
Medial Block Branch	2,118	1,924	90.8%	194	9.2%
Sacroiliac	981	909	92.7%	72	7.3%
Transforaminal Injection	2,005	1,738	86.7%	267	13.3%
Other spine surgery	22	21	95.5%	1	4.5%
TOTAL	13,593	12,182	89.6%	1,411	10.4%

Subcategory: Other Injections

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Other injections	1,405	1,252	89.1%	153	10.9%

Appendix B8. Treatment Request Outcomes: Rehabilitation

Subcategory: Acupuncture

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Acupuncture	9,733	8,730	89.7%	1,003	10.3%

Subcategory: Chiropractic

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Manual Manipulation	526	501	95.2%	25	4.8%
Other chiropractic	5,727	5,100	89.1%	627	10.9%
TOTAL	6,253	5,601	89.6%	652	10.4%

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

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Active and Passive Modalities, PT and/or OT	10,939	9,973	91.2%	966	8.8%
Occupational Therapy	1,918	1,759	91.7%	159	8.3%
Physical Therapy	17,324	15,776	91.1%	1,548	8.9%
TOTAL	30,181	27,508	91.1%	2,673	8.9%

Subcategory: Other Rehabilitation

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Aqua Therapy	2,271	2,092	92.1%	179	7.9%
Cold/Cryotherapy	430	411	95.6%	19	4.4%
Compression Therapy	99	93	93.9%	6	6.1%
Functional Capacity Test	851	718	84.4%	133	15.6%
Massage Therapy	2,309	2,033	88.0%	276	12.0%
Other Therapies	2,577	2,323	90.1%	254	9.9%
TOTAL	8,537	7,670	89.8%	867	10.2%

Appendix B9. Treatment Request Outcomes: Surgery

Subcategory: Adjunct Surgical Services

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Assistant Surgeon	2,206	2,058	93.3%	148	6.7%
Inpatient Stay	2,051	1,899	92.6%	152	7.4%
Other adjunct surgical	388	360	92.8%	28	7.2%
TOTAL	4,645	4,317	92.9%	328	7.1%

Subcategory: Arthroscopic Surgery

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Arthroscopy	1,223	1,095	89.5%	128	10.5%
Surgery–Ankle	285	257	90.2%	28	9.8%
Surgery–Elbow	294	246	83.7%	48	16.3%
Surgery–Hip	87	81	93.1%	6	6.9%
Surgery–Knee	1,016	933	91.8%	83	8.2%
Surgery–Shoulder	1,164	1,060	91.1%	104	8.9%
Surgery–Wrist	197	161	81.7%	36	18.3%
TOTAL	4,266	3,833	89.8%	433	10.2%

Subcategory: Non-arthroscopic Surgery

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Arthroplasty	211	183	86.7%	28	13.3%
Carpel Tunnel	683	586	85.8%	97	14.2%
Discectomy	330	299	90.6%	31	9.4%
Fusion	1,091	1,021	93.6%	70	6.4%
Knee Replace/Revision	241	219	90.9%	22	9.1%
Laminectomy	247	220	89.1%	27	10.9%
Radiofrequency Ablation	833	747	89.7%	86	10.3%
Shoulder Surgery	227	200	88.1%	27	11.9%
Spinal Cord Stimulator	759	716	94.3%	43	5.7%
Spine Surgery	591	535	90.5%	56	9.5%
Other surgery	971	803	82.7%	168	17.3%
TOTAL	6,184	5,529	89.4%	655	10.6%

Subcategory: Surgical Consult

Service	Total Requests	Upholds	Percent Upheld	Overturns	Percent Overturned
Preoperative Clearance	2,179	2,035	93.4%	144	6.6%
Surgical Clearance	125	118	94.4%	7	5.6%
Other surgical consult	289	231	79.9%	58	20.1%
TOTAL	2,593	2,384	91.9%	209	8.1%

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