



Washington State Department of
Labor & Industries

Child Physical Abuse Exams

2023 Annual Report to the Legislature

November 2023

Available online at: [Lni.wa.gov/LegReports](https://lni.wa.gov/LegReports)

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Introduction

The Washington State Department of Labor & Industries' (L&I) Crime Victims Compensation (CVC) program assists people who have been affected by violent crime. The program provides financial compensation to crime victims for expenses such as medical bills, loss of financial support, and funeral expenses.

The CVC program is a payer of last resort, after all other financial sources (such as medical, auto, or life insurance) have been exhausted. Victims who suffer bodily injury or emotional trauma from a crime may be eligible for assistance, provided funds are available.

BACKGROUND

In 2022, the Washington State Legislature passed [Substitute Senate Bill 5814](#), which authorized L&I's CVC program to pay for forensic exams for child victims of physical abuse. The bill authorized CVC to pay for these exams regardless of other financial resources available to child victims. CVC covers these exams as a primary payer.

When SSB 5814 became law, it required that physical abuse exams be covered without meeting the program's eligibility criteria.

The bill also required L&I to report to the legislature by Nov. 1, 2023:

- the total number of claims requesting payment for child abuse exams;
- the number of claims approved or denied, including reasons for denial; and
- the number of claims covered for another reason.

This report provides the required information.

Reporting Requirements

TOTAL NUMBER OF CLAIMS RECEIVED

This legislation became effective June 9, 2022. L&I received 418 claims for child physical abuse exams. This number includes claims received for exams from the June 9, 2022, effective date through the end of FY 2023. During this period, the total amount billed for the child physical abuse exams was \$366,116. The program paid \$194,852 for 392 of the exams billed. The difference between the billed and paid amounts is due to CVC using the agency’s medical fee schedule to determine reimbursement for services provided. Medical providers must consider this payment in full, and may not bill for the difference. Additionally, 26 claims were not paid as child physical abuse examination for reasons listed in Figure 2, including five that were paid by CVC, but as sexual assault rather than child physical abuse.

Figure 1: Total number of claims received and amounts paid

Period Covered	Claims received	Claims paid	Amount billed	Amount paid
June 9, 2022 to June 30, 2023	418	392	\$366,116	\$194,852

Figure 2: Claims not paid by CVC

Reasons for non-payment	Number of claims
Covered as a sexual assault exam in lieu of child physical abuse exam	5
Missing forms or reports or billing error	6
Crime not committed in WA; claims coded as child physical abuse in error; or bills were for follow-up care, not forensic exams.*	15

** Includes any error on a bill that prevented payment, such as omitting billing codes or using child-specific codes on adult claims.*

Conclusion

In FY 2023, L&I received 418 claims for child abuse exams. In comparison, from FY 2016-2020, when the first iteration of this benefit was authorized, only about 600 claims were received; due to additional stipulations, L&I paid very few of them. Since legislative barriers were removed in 2022, more child abuse victims have access to these vital exams.

L&I continues to refine billing processes and outreach to make additional health care providers aware of this service for child victims of physical abuse so that every eligible child victim receives these needed services.