

IME Roundtable Virtual Meeting

May 22, 2025



Announcements

Online Meeting Reminders:

- Mute when not speaking to limit background noise
- Raise hand or use chat feature
- Opt out of video if having connection issues
- Meeting Minutes will be posted on L&I Webpage

Time	Topic	05/22/25 IME Roundtable Meeting Agenda	Presenters
9:30AM	Safety Message, Accountability Log Review		Melissa Dunbar, Troy Parks
9:45AM	Program Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examiner Pool Complaints Examiner Exit & Retention Surveys MEH Updates Quality Review 		Troy Parks Melissa Dunbar Teri Baughman
10:15AM	Mental Health Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental Health Updates PTSD Diagnosis 		Dr. Jennifer Jutte
10:45AM	IME Recording: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Third-Party Recording Pilot Update Utilization Data 		Troy Parks
11:15AM	Break		
11:25AM	Interpreter Scheduling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpreter Services Update & Data Language Link Update 		Cristy Miller
11:55AM	L&I Unit Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Claims <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-person interpretation Non-coop process Secure Messages to CM's Documenting the IME report regarding recording Scheduling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel Update/Barriers Self-Insurance 		Nancy Adams Shannon Rushing LaNae Lien
12:10AM-12:30PM	Q&A-Open discussion Round Robin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IME Provider Topics Future Topic Suggestions 		All

Safety Topic: Melissa Dunbar

- May is motorcycle safety month.
- Motorcycles make up about 3% of vehicles in accidents but about 14% of fatalities.
- Most often in collisions involving motorcycles the motorcyclist is **not** at fault.
- Make sure you always check your blind spots and do not drive distracted.
- Leave plenty of space when behind a motorcycle.



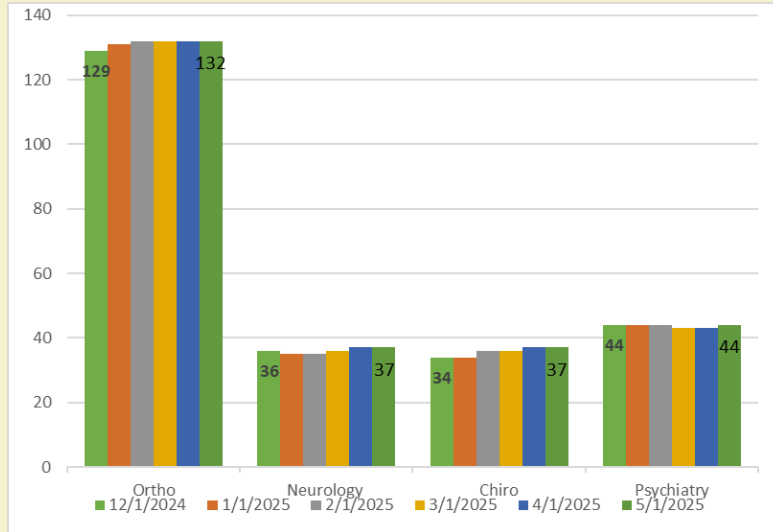
Accountability: Issue Log

Issue:	Department Updates / Outcomes:
Interpreter scheduling issues	<p><u>5/22/25:</u> utilization data presented; discussion on mitigation efforts to ensure weekend coverage for IME firms.</p> <p><u>1/16/25:</u> update on IME utilization and roll out of on-demand over the phone 1/2/25.</p> <p><u>9/19/24:</u> SOSi is the new interpreter services provider.</p> <p><u>6/17/24</u> Go Live!</p>
Legislative Bill that allowed recording of IMEs	<p><u>5/22/25:</u> recording pilot update. Co-recording rule writing abandoned/code reviser filing repealed.</p> <p><u>1/7/25:</u> GovDelivery message on delay in co-recording rule writing. Upcoming 3rd party recording pilot March-August 2025.</p> <p><u>9/19/24:</u> CR101 filed in August for Co-recording and Third-party recording pilot rules. Listening sessions held. Draft language shared Oct 10. Co-recording rules anticipated to file in December. Third-party recording pilot estimate to last 6 months.</p>
Large addendum Requests	<p><u>5/22/25:</u> firms shared concerns with large addendum requests associated with state fund claims and fraud investigations. Current reimbursement rate of \$168.19 is a global fee (file review included). Department is exploring payment options to address the extra amount of time it takes for examiners to review new records. One option is quantifying # of pages included in the fee reimbursement and allowing billing of 1129M (Extensive File Review) for pages after set threshold.</p> <p>L&I met with CSP on fraud investigator requests and explored ways to improve processes. Additional engagement expected to scope questions being asked of examiners and to refine scope of future requests.</p>

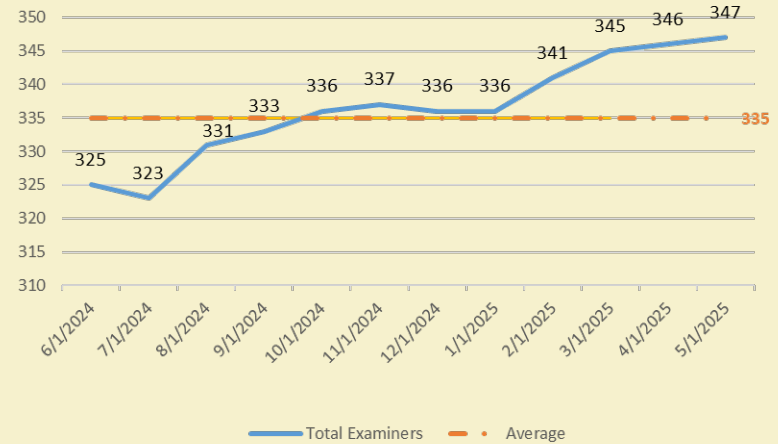
IME Program Updates

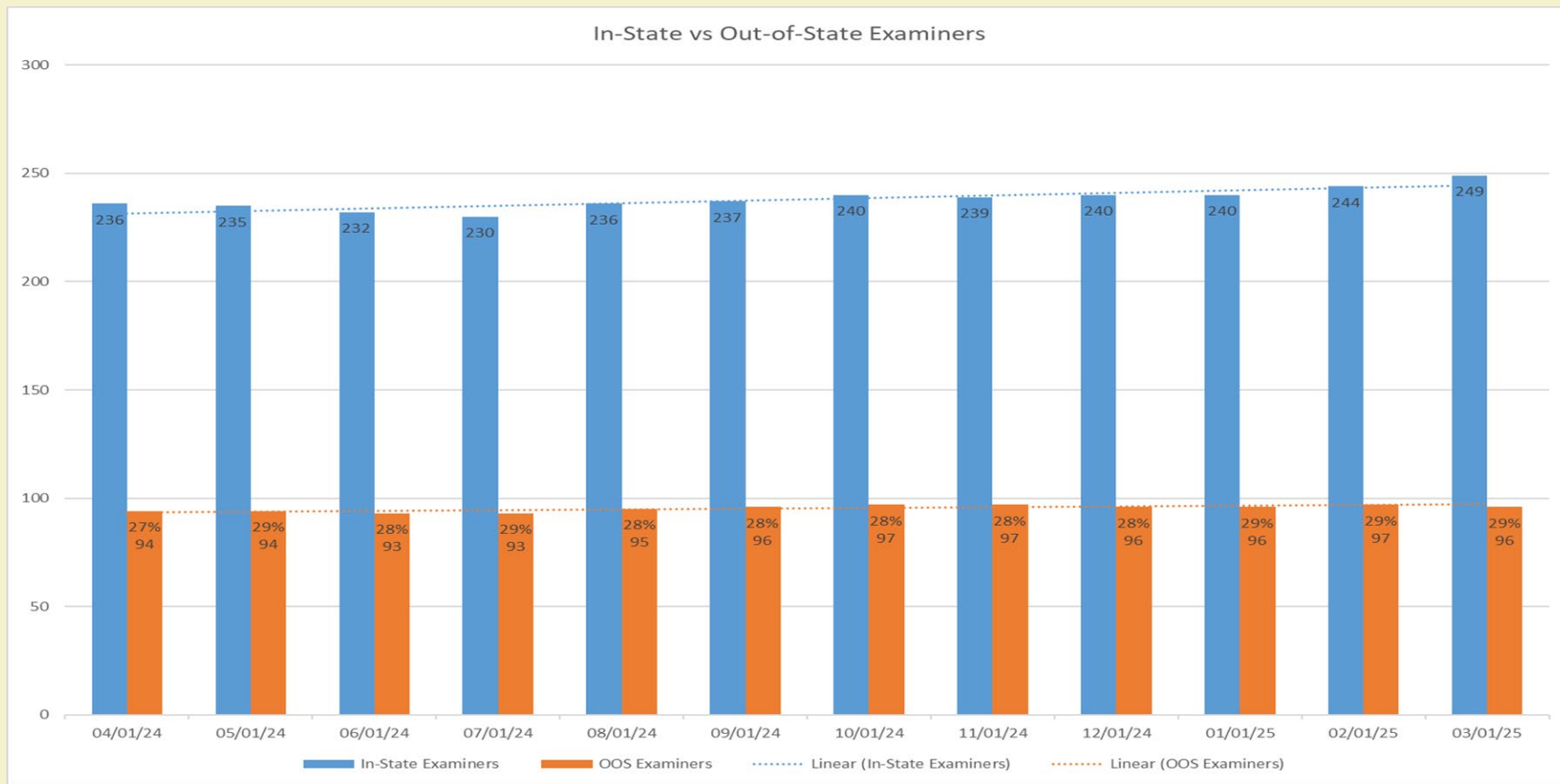
IME Examiner Pool

TOP EXAMINER SPECIALTIES



TREND ALL EXAMINERS



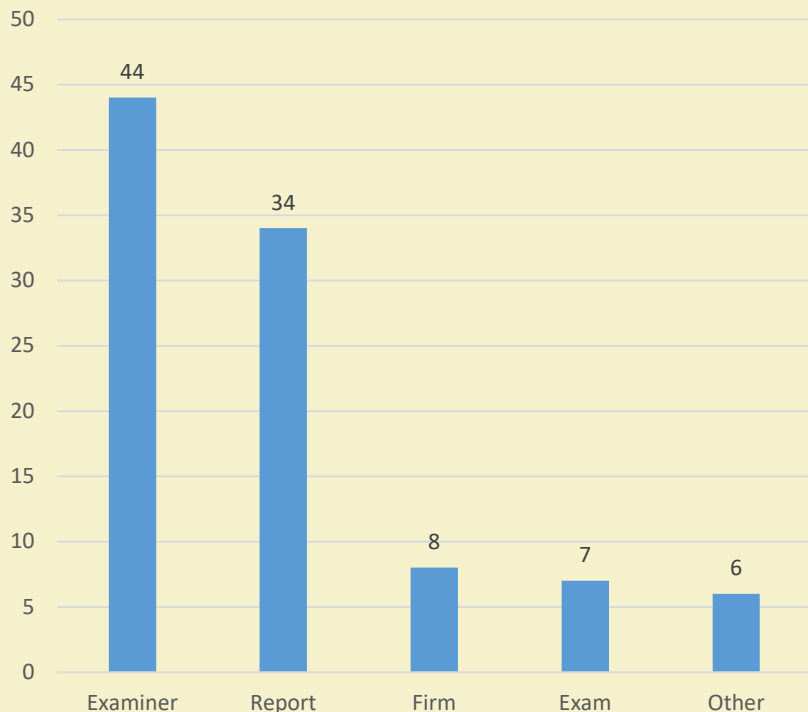


May 1, 2025=250(72%) In-State; 97(28%) Out of State

New Approved Examiners vs Exiting Examiners



2025 Complaints-YTD



99 Complaints YTD

Top Specialties:

- Orthopedic Surgery(44)
- Neurology (16)
- Psychiatry (10)
- Pulmonology (5)

9 were recorded exams

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

Retention Survey (2 responses YTD 2025)

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

Respondent A: Rating of 9

Comments:

- *What would have to happen for that number to become a 10? Increase reimbursement*
- *Why do you continue to do exams? Challenging often interesting cases.*

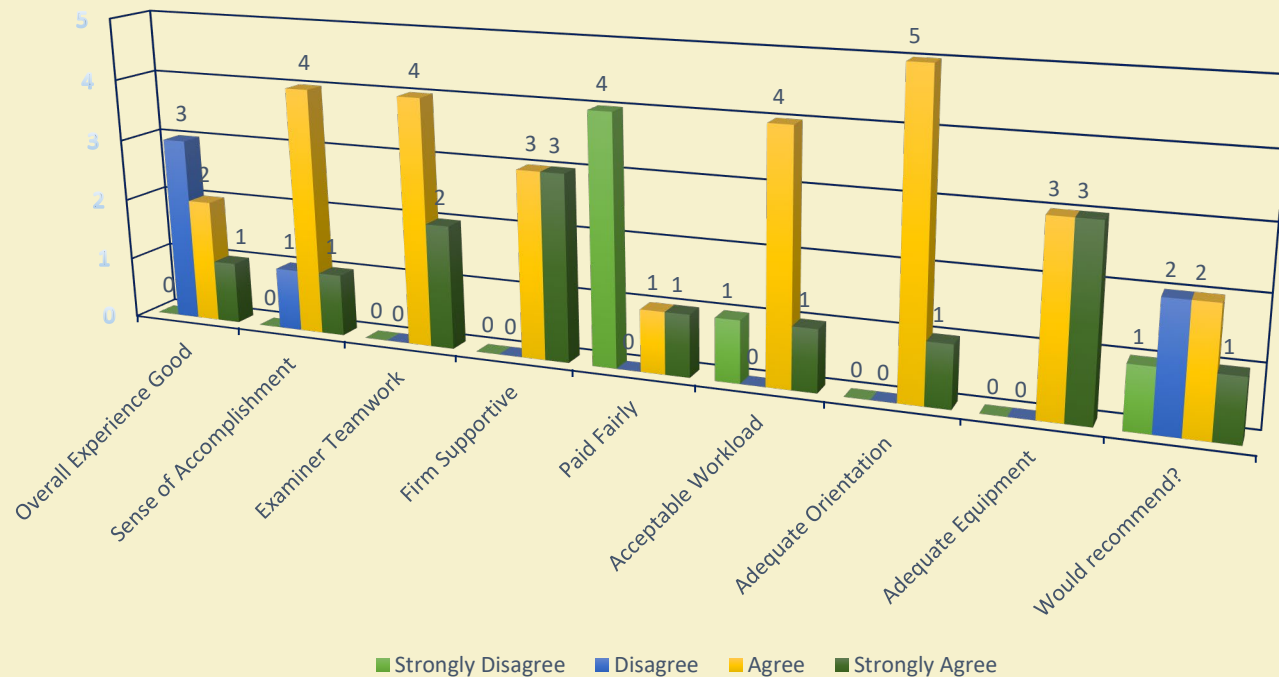
Respondent B: Rating of 10

Comments:

- *Why do you continue to do exams? I am interested in seeing different cases.*



Examiner Exit Survey (6 Responses CY 2024)



Medical Examiners' Handbook Update

- Interpretation Services
- WACs & RCWs
- Treatment Guidelines
- Mental Health updates

Update suggestions can be sent to:
Melissa Dunbar

Melissa.Dunbar@lni.wa.gov

Medical Examiners' Handbook

July 2024 Update

Impairment Ratings and Independent Medical Examinations
in Washington State Workers' Compensation

For IME Examiners, Attending Doctors and Consultants



Free 3 Hours Category 1 CME Credit

The Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) is accredited by the Washington State Medical Association to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

L&I designates this type of enduring material for a maximum of 3 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)[™]. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

This activity meets the criteria for up to 3 hours of Category 1 CME credit to satisfy the relicensure requirements of the Washington State Medical Quality Assurance Commission.

Accreditation: Original Activity Date — July 1, 2018

Renewal Date — July 1, 2024

Expiration Date — June 30, 2027

This publication contains guidelines, sample reports, and billing procedures for preparing and conducting impairment ratings and independent medical exams (IME) in Washington's Workers' Compensation system. The activity was planned and produced in accordance with the WSMA Essential Elements, Criteria, and Standards of Accreditation of Continuing Medical Education.

Disclosure: None of the faculty involved with developing this handbook or self assessment test online has any financial relationship to disclose nor do they financially benefit from this product.



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Questions?



IME Quality Review Update

IME Occupational Nurse Consultant

Cicely Hartwick

360-902-6596

Cicely.Hartwick@lni.wa.gov

Questions?



Mental Health Update

Jennifer Jutte, PhD, ABPP, MPH
Associate Medical Director for Psychology
Office of the Medical Director

Relevant Legislation

- HB 1197 (RCW 51.08.200)
 - The intent of the legislation is to allow psychologists to serve as Attending Providers and to improve access to treatment in claims solely for mental health conditions
 - Effective date: July 1, 2025
 - Applies retroactively

Title 51 RCWs Amended/Created in HB 1197 (Chapter 171, Laws of 2023)

- [51.08.200](#) - Attending provider (new section)
- [51.04.050](#) - Health services provider's testimony not privileged
- [51.28.010](#) - Notice of accident—Notification of worker's rights—Claim suppression
- [51.28.020](#) - Worker's application for compensation—Attending provider to aid in
- [51.28.030](#) - Beneficiaries' application for compensation—Notification of rights
- [51.32.055](#) - Determination of permanent disabilities—Closure of claims by self-insurers
- [51.32.090](#) - Temporary total disability—Partial restoration of earning power—Return to available work—When employer continues wages—Limitations—Finding—Rules
- [51.32.095](#) - Vocational rehabilitation services—Benefits—Priorities—Allowable costs—Performance criteria
- [51.36.010](#) - Findings—Minimum standards for providers—Health care provider network—Advisory group—Best practices treatment guidelines—Extent and duration of treatment—Centers for occupational health and education—Rules—Reports
- [51.36.022](#) - Residence modification assistance—Rules—Report to legislature
- [51.36.060](#) - Duties of attending provider—Medical information
- [51.36.070](#) - Medical examination—Reports—Costs—Worker's rights

Rulemaking Timeline

- Filed CR-102 January 21, 2025
- Rules public hearing February 26, 2025
- File CR-103 Adopting final language
 - Will be filed May 20, 2025
 - Rules will be effective July 1, 2025
- L&I contact: Jami.Lifka@Lni.Wa.Gov

What Do Psychologists Need to Do?

- Psychologists must join the Medical Provider Network on or before June 30, 2025.
- They can opt to serve as Attending Providers on solely mental health claims.
 - Per RCW 296.23.317, no IME or impairment ratings can be performed by psychologists.

Who Can Perform Psychiatric IMEs?

- Only psychiatrists (MD/DO) can perform psychiatric IMEs in Washington State and in our workers' compensation system.
- Psychologists are permitted to perform psychiatric IMEs in multiple other states.

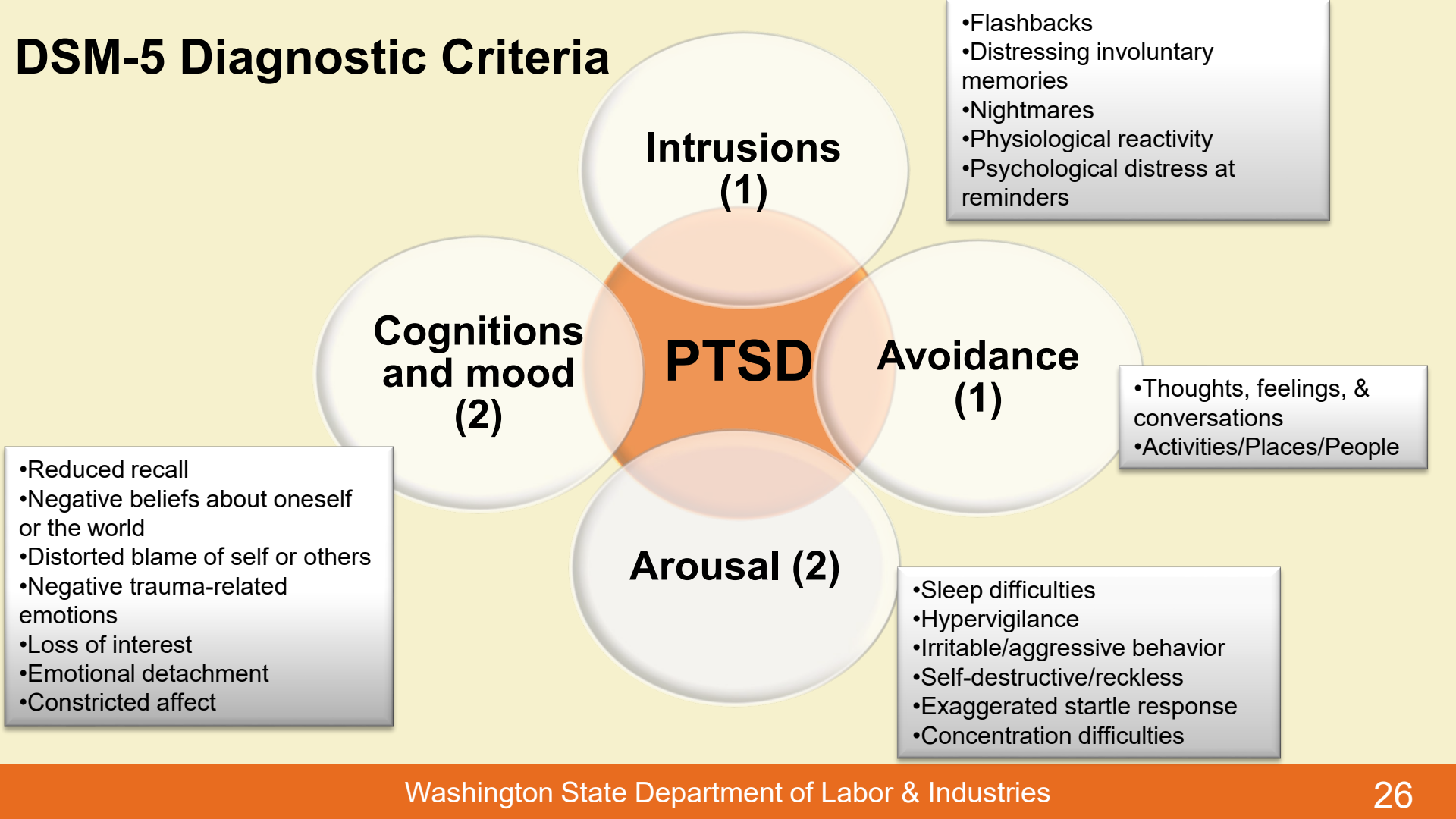
Medical Aid Rules and Fee Schedules: Relevant Updates

MARFS Chapter 17: Mental Health and Behavioral Health Interventions

- Inclusion of mental health, behavioral health, and PGAP (Progressive Goal Attainment Program)
- Clarification of the billing requirements and updated time limits for psychological and neuropsychological evaluation services
- New tables to add clarification in other areas
- Mental health facilities and telehealth have been moved to different chapters

Trauma Exposure and PTSD: A Brief Overview

DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria



Additional Important DSM-5 Criteria

- Symptom duration is more than 1 month
- Symptoms cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of function

How Is the Diagnosis Typically Made?

- Clinical diagnostic interview
- Diagnostic measures – Gold standard structured clinical interview administered by a trained mental health professional
 - Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale for DSM-5 (CAPS-5)
 - PTSD Symptom Scale – Interview for DSM-5 (PSS-I-5)
 - Structured Clinical Interview for the DSM-5 (SCID PTSD Module)

PTSD Relevant Projects

PTSD Survey and Jurisdictional Review

Deliverable Description: An external contractor/vendor will assess PTSD workers' compensation benefits, policies, coverage, and findings on PTSD prevention projects and produce a detailed report for L&I.

Success Criteria: The vendor report meaningfully informs future strategies for L&I PTSD policies, benefits, and claim management processes and assists in the completion of a required report to the legislature.

Current Status: Workstream team, sponsors, and subject matter experts have reviewed and provided comments on an initial draft report submitted by vendor.

Next Steps: Additional review and comment with final acceptance of the vendor report by mid-May. Engage the vendor to assist, if needed and as appropriate, in the completion of the draft L&I PTSD Report to the Legislature.

L&I submits report to the legislature by June 30, 2025.

Data Collection and Report Production

Deliverable Description: Define and standardize the data elements needed to appropriately identify PTSD claims and produce needed reports

Success Criteria: Identified the needed data elements and have a reproducible plan to produce the needed reports

Current Status: Data elements defined to appropriately identify PTSD claims, and standardized report was built with clear data definitions

Next Steps:

- Finalize the report with Research and Data Services (RDS)
- Complete first quarter reporting for January 2025 through March 2025. Make adjustments as needed
- Finalize the report out process
- Target Completion date: July 2025

PTSD Clinical Guideline Development

- The Industrial Insurance Medical Advisory Committee (IIMAC) PTSD subcommittee has met monthly since August, 2024 and is on track to have clinical guidelines developed by Fall, 2025.
- Among questions we plan to answer:
 - What are gold standard diagnostic tools that can assist in limiting over- or under-diagnosing?
 - What are the best way(s) to screen for PTSD and to track symptoms over time?
 - Which evidence informed treatments are recommended?
 - What does an appropriate treatment course and outcome(s) look like for the trauma-exposed (work-related) workers we serve
 - Duration of treatment, types of treatment
 - Potential need for escalation of treatment, second opinion, evaluation, or even Centers of Excellence
- Easy to understand, credible within community and providers

Dr. Stephen Thielke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Subcommittee Chair</u> • IIMAC Member • Professor, University of Washington, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences 	Dr. Michele Bedard-Gilligan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professor, University of Washington, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences • Co-Director, Trauma Recovery and Resilience Innovations Program • Associate Director, UW Center for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress
Dr. Dawn Ehde	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Subcommittee Co-Chair</u> • IIMAC Member • Professor, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, School of Medicine, University of Washington 	Dr. April Gerlock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Professor, University of Washington, School of Nursing, Biobehavioral Nursing and Health Informatics (BNHI) • Psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner
Laurie Gwerder, ARNP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IIMAC Member • Occupational Health ARNP, MultiCare 	Felicia Lauritsen, LICSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioral Health Consultant, Kaiser Permanente
Dr. Jiho Bryson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IIMAC Member • Occupational Medicine Physician, The Everett Clinic 	Lucy Berliner, MSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former Director, now retired with temporary appointment, Harborview Abuse and Trauma Center
Dr. Andrew Friedman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IIMAC Chair • Psychiatrist, Virginia Mason Franciscan Health 	Dr. Paula Schnurr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director, National Center for PTSD • Professor of Psychiatry, Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth
Dr. Jessica Hamblen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Director, Education, National Center for PTSD • Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth 	Dr. Jay Skidmore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Health Psychologist & Consultant • Chief of Healthcare, Fitness & Multidisciplinary Rehabilitation--NWRW Rehabilitation Center
Dr. Paul Holtzheimer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Director, Research, National Center for PTSD • Professor, Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth 		

Workers' Compensation Advisory Committee: PTSD Subcommittee

- Membership includes internal and external stakeholders
 - L&I leadership
 - Labor and business representatives
- We have had quarterly meetings since June, 2024.
- Members recognize the impact of PTSD on claimants, their families, and costs to the system.
- Collaborative discussions on opportunities for best outcomes.

Questions?



IME Recording Update



IME Recording Implementation Update

- RCW 51.36.070 effective 7/1/23, giving workers the right to record IMEs
- External partners disagree on examiner ability to co-record resulting in delays and/or inability to schedule exams
- Department proposed rules to address concerns around co-recording
- External feedback did not support moving forward with co-recording rule

Mitigation measures...

- Department is conducting a Third Party Recording Pilot to explore whether offering a secure third party recording service reduces the delays resulting from cancelation and rescheduling of IMEs when a worker chooses to record.

Note:

- ☐ Workers may opt to use this service in lieu of using their own device to record
 - ☐ Examiners may use service if a worker affirmatively agrees to co-recording
- Pilot will help inform any future rulemaking efforts or changes to IME policies.

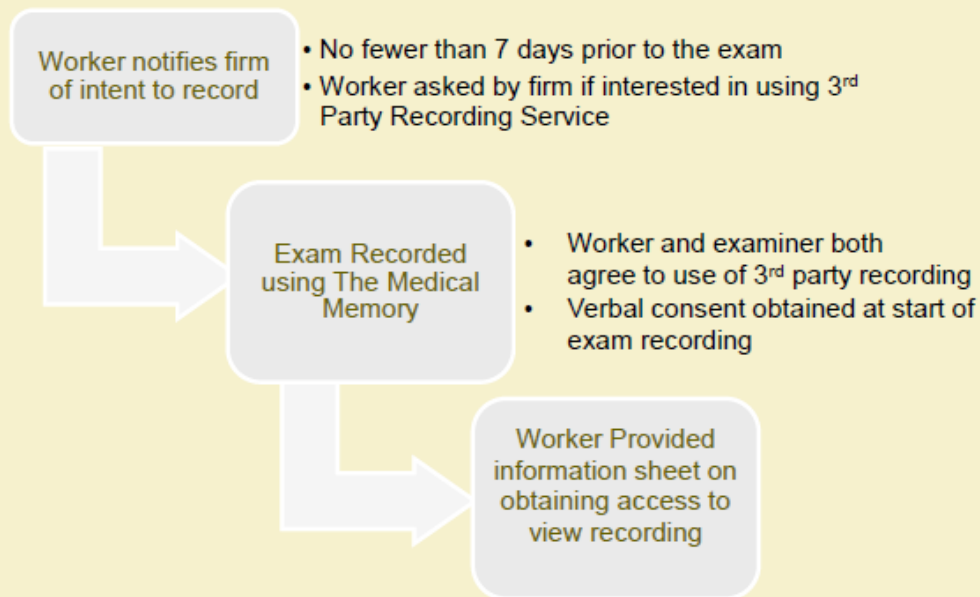
IME Third Party Recording Pilot

- L&I has contracted with a vendor to provide a 3rd party recording service (Medical Memory).
- We will assess if both parties are willing to use a 3rd party recording service.
- 6 months: **3/1/25 through 8/31/25**
- Any worker wishing to record can use the service
- Available for co-recording (for those instances when worker still would like to do their own recording)

Desired Outcomes...

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

3rd Party Recording Flow



 **MEDICAL MEMORY**
Secure - HIPAA Compliant

Your IME is recorded with Medical Memory

- 1 Request access to your video by emailing IMEThirdPartyRecording@ni.wa.gov
- 2 Include your Name, Phone Number & Email
- 3 You'll receive an invitation to create an account via email with Medical Memory. Learn more about Medical Memory



SCAN ME

Clinic Workflow



1

The IME Staff rooms the worker and inputs the worker's information.



2

Examiners Record IME



3

The Department can decide who can view the video



4

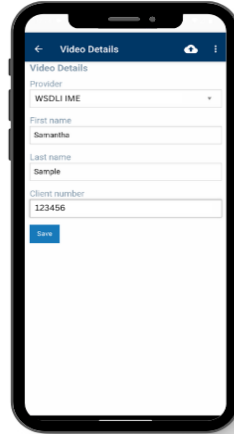
The Department can provide remote access to the video.

Examiner Recording IME



Once linked to the App

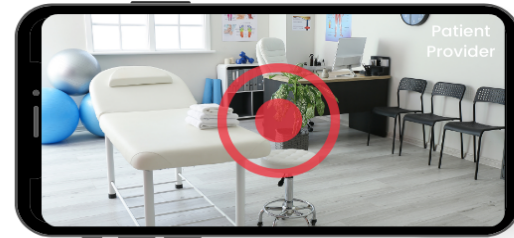
Tap



In the Provider
dropdown select
Washington State IME

Enter Worker First & Last
Name, then enter the
Claim ID in the
Client Number field
and tap

Save



Rotate device to landscape.

Tap  icon to start recording.

Bring the worker into the room and
have your appointment as usual.

 Pause & resume the video if needed.

Tap  to delete & re-record.

Once your patient leaves the room
return to the device

Save the recording:



when done.

Video instantly begins to uploaded.



Tap  then Send

Measuring Impact

- Utilization: Did access to third party recording improve access to IME providers?
 - Completion rate
 - Referral success rate
- Timeliness:
 - Duration of IME referrals when recording requested



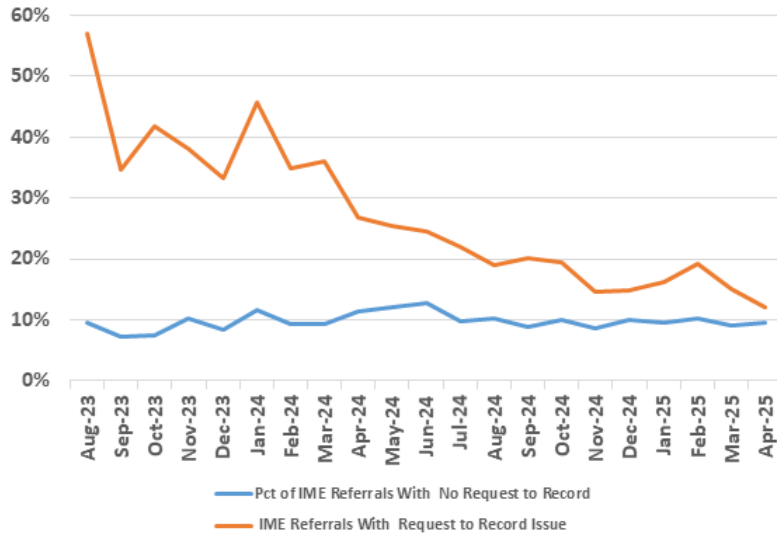
Utilization 2.5 months in....

- 121 recordings using 3rd party Medical Memory service
(Averaging 2 per day; 90% state fund claims)
- 3 firms currently using (CSP, ExamWorks, MES)
- Authenticated 46 devices
- No workers have requested to view recording
- Outreach to broaden awareness of pilot

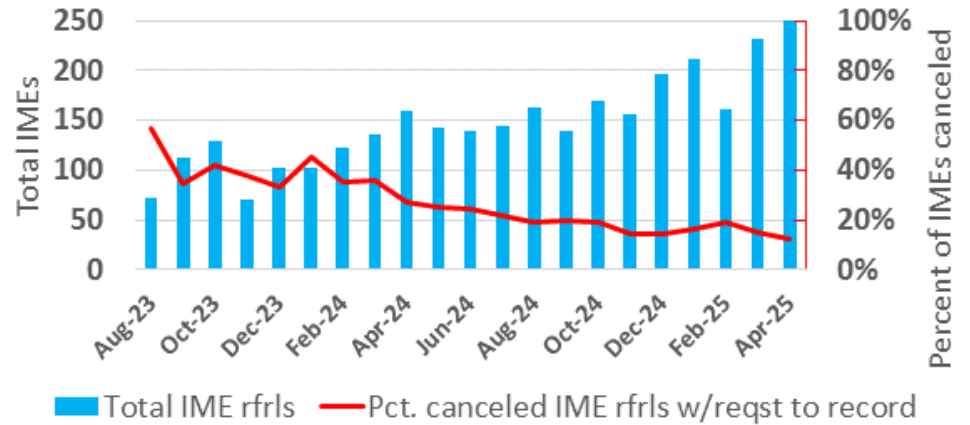


IME Referral Data

Percentage of IME Referrals Canceled



Canceled IME referrals with request to record



More analysis ...

- Validating data on IME completion rate and duration time between referral and exam
- Recording quality
- Please enter worker claim number in Medical Memory App prior to pushing record
- Assess pilot in July-stop, extend, make service permanent

Reminders about recorded exams so that we have accurate data...

- Examiner needs to annotate in introductory portion of IME report exam was recorded (indicate audio, video or both)
- Complete post exam screen in scheduling system:

« Post-Exam list of offers
Post-Exam Results

Claim no(s): [REDACTED] Patient: [REDACTED]
Claim manager:
Chelsea Sale

Specialty	Examiner	Appointment	*Exam Conducted?	*Exam recorded by patient?	*Exam recorded by specialist?
Neurology	Zoltani, John	05/14/2025 - 1:00 PM	<input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO
Psychiatry	Hudak, Gary	05/14/2025 - 5:00 PM	<input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO	<input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO

Was a reminder call made to the patient?
(A reminder call is required. [See WAC 296-23-347](#)) ☐ YES ☐ NO

Have further diagnostics been ordered? ☐ YES ☒ NO

Discussion – Feedback on Pilot



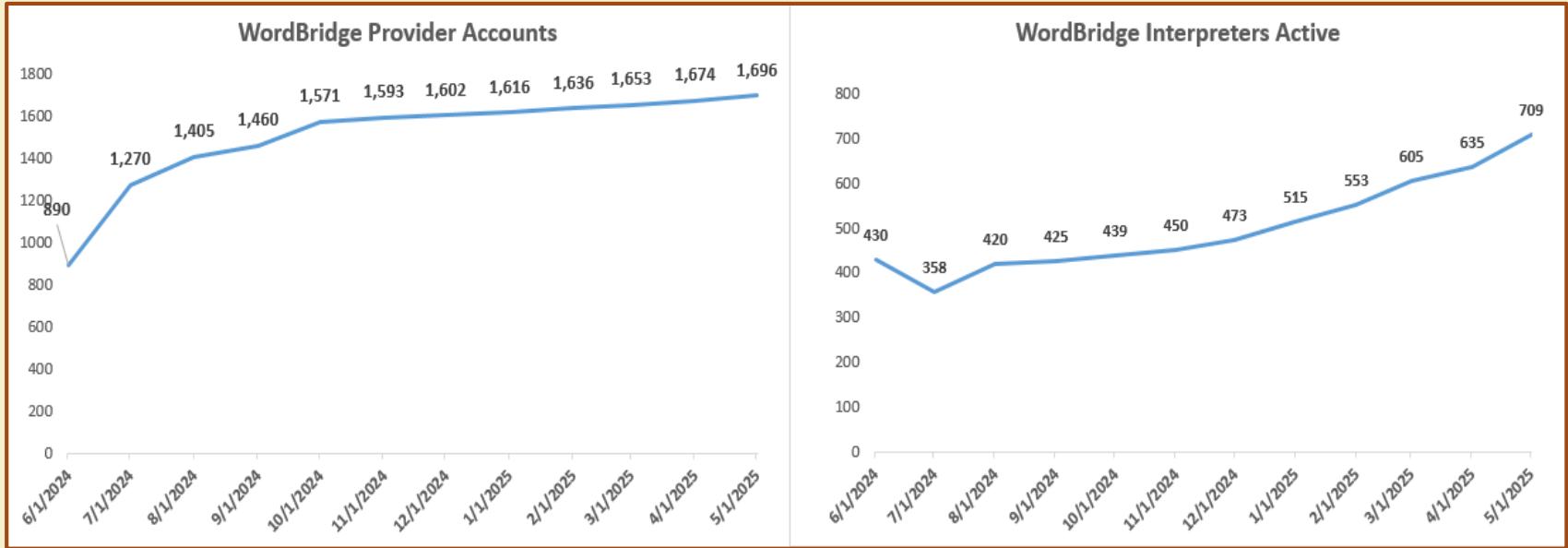
10 Minute Break...



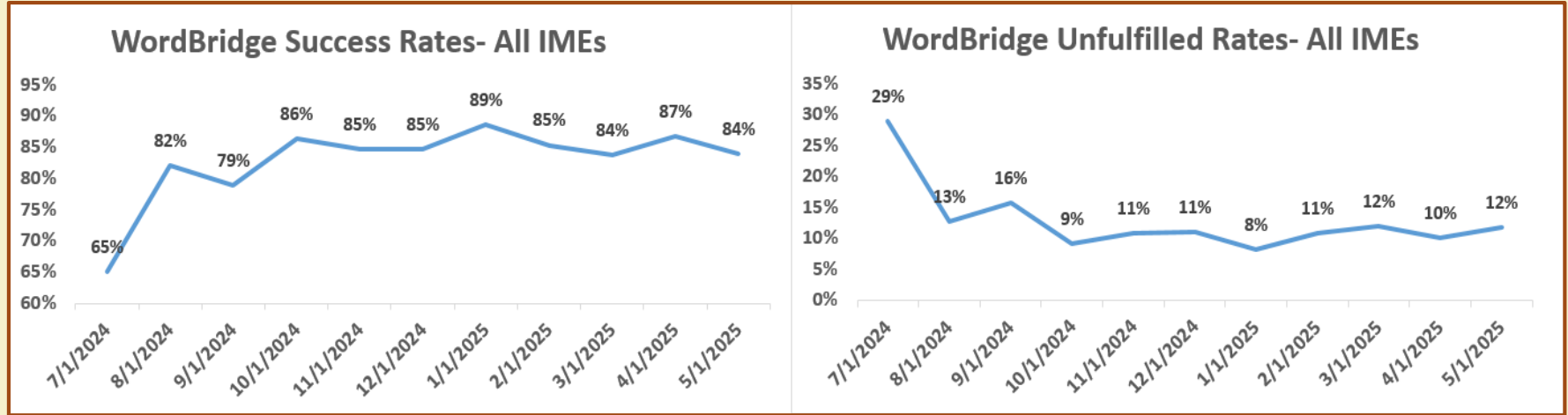
WordBridge Interpretation Services

- All in-person interpreter services and scheduled telephonic and video services via Zoom must be submitted through WordBridge
- SOSi's phone line for on-demand telephonic interpretation services rolled out January 2nd.
- If SOSi cannot secure an interpreter for on-demand telephonic services, they will transfer the call to **CTS Language Link**.

Onboarding of Providers and LAPs



IME Success and Unfulfilled Rates



Interpreter Quality Assurance

- SOSi is monitoring and addressing all issues of interpreter no-shows and late rejections
- [L&I Incident Resolution Process \(IRP\)](#)
- Report any interpreter issues to SOSi by emailing: Support@wordbridge.io

Contact Information

- Email SOSi: Support@wordbridge.io
- Phone: 1-888-224-0126
- L&I Interpretation Services: Interpretation@Lni.wa.gov

Questions?



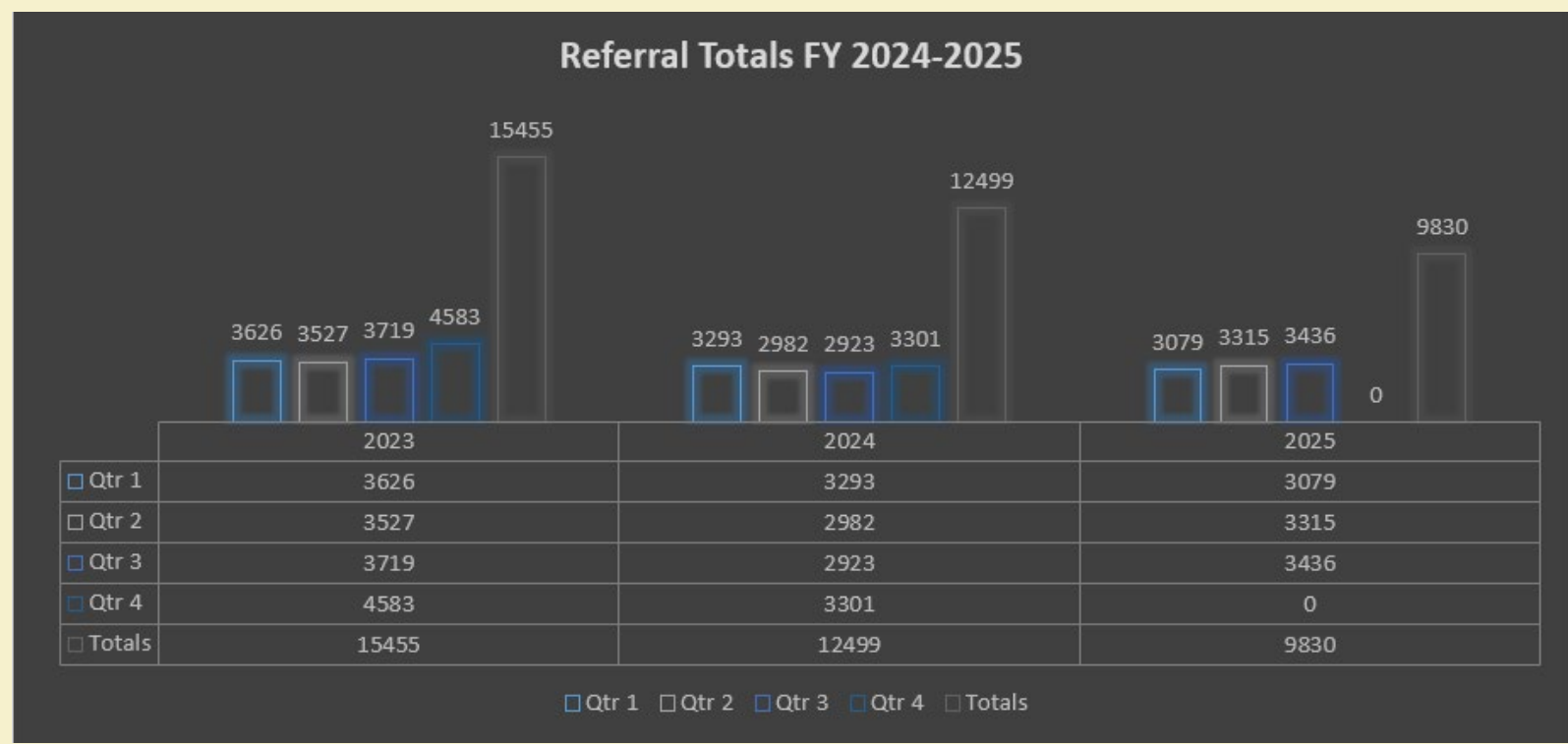
Claims Department – Nancy Adams

- In-person interpretation
- Non-coop process
- Secure messages to CM
- Documenting the IME Report re: Recording

IME Scheduling Trends - Shannon Rushing

- Travel updates/barriers
- Referral Data

There were a total of 9830 referrals created through FY QTR 3 2025 to date
Pending QTR 4 (April, May, June 2025)



Self-Insurance – LaNae Lien

- Self-Insurance Questions?

Questions?



Open Discussion – IME Providers

- Questions & Comments
 - Ex parte communications
- Future Topic Suggestions
- Next Meeting:
September 18, 2025