

# IME Roundtable Virtual Meeting

*January 16, 2025*



# Announcements

## Zoom 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

## 01/16/25 IME Roundtable Meeting Agenda

Time	Topic	Presenters
9:30AM	<b>Safety Message, Accountability Log Review</b>	Melissa Dunbar, Troy Parks
9:45AM	<b>Program Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing updates/introduction of new attendees</li> <li>• Examiner Pool</li> <li>• Complaints</li> <li>• Examiner Exit Surveys</li> <li>• Quality Review Recap 2019-2024</li> <li>• Role of the IME Firm Medical Director</li> </ul>	Troy Parks  Tanya Weber Dr. Azadeh Farokhi
10:15AM	<b>IME Recording:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation Update</li> <li>• Third-Party Recording Pilot</li> <li>• Discussion</li> </ul>	Troy Parks
10:45AM	<b>Break</b>	
10:55AM	<b>Interpreter Scheduling:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback on Rollout</li> <li>• Language Link Update</li> </ul>	Cristy Miller
11:05AM	<b>L&amp;I Unit Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claims</li> <li>• Self-Insurance</li> <li>• Scheduling</li> </ul>	Nancy Adams LaNae Lien Shannon Rushing
11:15AM-12:00PM	<b>Q&amp;A-Open discussion Round Robin</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IME Provider Topics</li> <li>• Future Topic Suggestions</li> </ul>	All

# Taking Breaks to Stretch

1. Reduces Fatigue - by increasing blood supply and nutrients to your muscles.
2. Can Prevent Muscle Strain Injuries - wakes up your muscles to let them know that they will be performing a job. Stretching warms up the muscles by working them gently.
3. Improves Posture - by allowing muscle tissues to realign, thus reducing effort to achieve and maintain good posture.
4. Increases Muscle Coordination and Balance - helps opposing muscle groups work in a more coordinated fashion.

## Neck

Let your head drop slowly to the left, then to the right. Slowly drop your chin to your chest, and then raise your chin as high as you can. Turn your head to the left, return it to the normal position, then turn it to the right.



## Shoulder Roll

Slowly roll your shoulders forward five times in circular motion, using your full range of motion. Then roll your shoulders backward five times with the same circular motion.



## Middle-Upper Back Stretch

Raise your right arm and grasp it below the elbow with your left hand. Gently pull your right elbow toward your left shoulder as you feel for the stretch. Hold for five seconds. Repeat with the opposite arm.



## Side Stretch

Interlace your fingers. Lift your arms over your head, keeping your elbows straight. Press your arms backward as far as you can. Then slowly lean to the left, and then to the right, until you can feel the stretch.



## Pectoral Stretch

Grasp your hands behind your neck and press your elbows back as far as you can. Return to starting position, then drop your arms. Relax. Repeat.



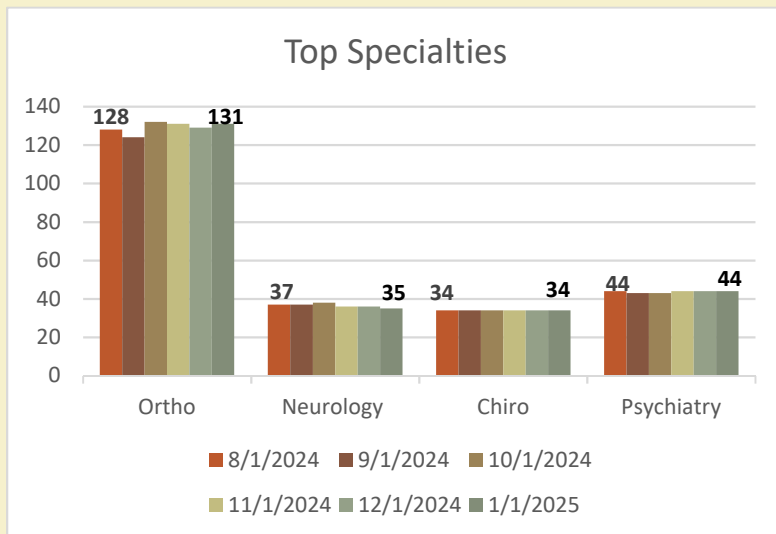
# Accountability: Issue Log

Issue:	Department Updates / Outcomes:
<b>Interpreter scheduling issues</b>	<p><b>1/16/25: update on IME utilization and roll out of on-demand over the phone 1/2/25.</b></p> <p>9/19/24: SOSi is the new interpreter services provider.</p> <p>6/17/24 Go Live!</p>
<b>Legislative Bill that allowed recording of IMEs</b>	<p><b>1/17/25: GovDelivery message on delay in co-recording rule writing. Upcoming 3<sup>rd</sup> party recording pilot March-August 2025.</b></p> <p>9/19/24: 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> <p>Week of 5/6/24 listening sessions with Business &amp; IME Firms.            Held additional listening sessions July and August:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recording Impacts</li> <li>• Forensic IMEs</li> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Recording</li> </ul> <p>Updated FAQ document online</p>
<b>Concern: Out of state examiners unaware of registering for Business &amp; Operation taxes</b>	<p><b>9/19/24: L&amp;I does not have jurisdiction over B&amp;O tax compliance, WA Dept. of Revenue does. Further, L&amp;I pays the firm, who has contractual relationship with examiner and have responsibility to ensure their contractors are adhering to state and federal laws.</b></p> <p>The IME provider agreement, MEH, and WAC 296-23-317 state:</p> <p>WAC 296-23-317 (1)(j)            Provider must comply with all federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and other requirements with regard to business operations, including specific requirements for the provision of medical services.</p>

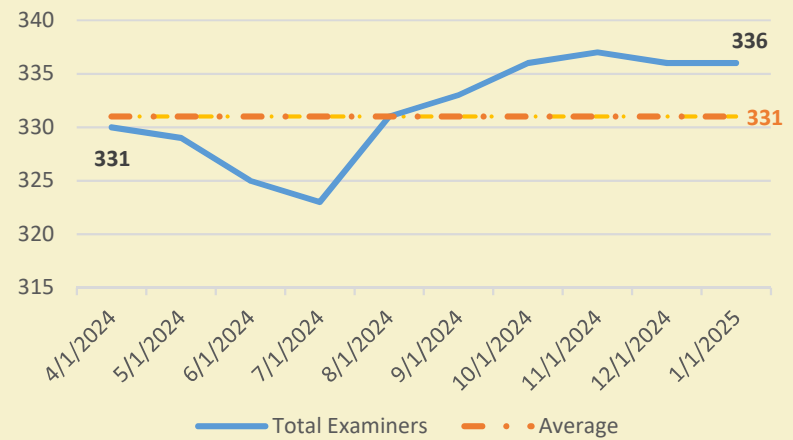
# IME Program Updates

# IME Examiner Pool

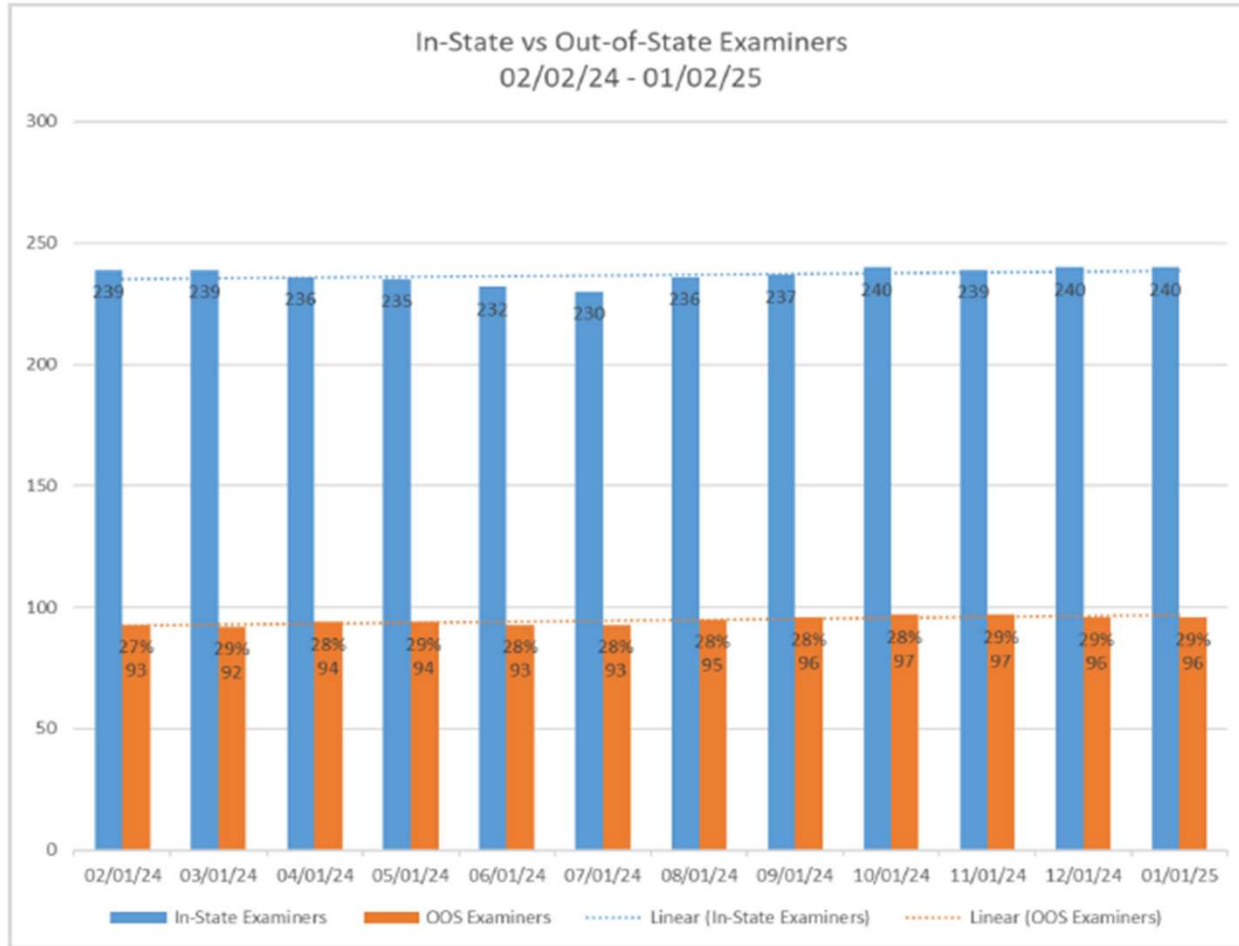
## TOP SPECIALTIES



## TREND ALL EXAMINERS

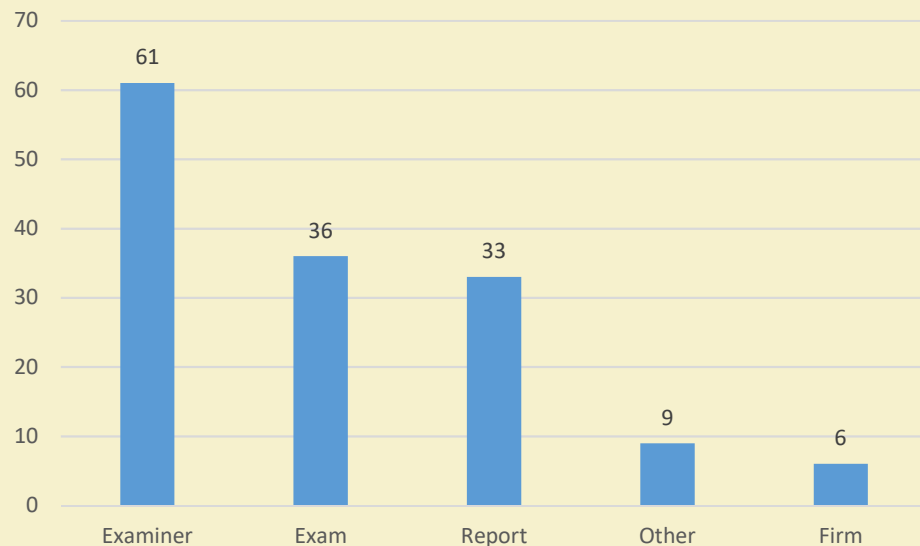


Note: 162 examiners actively associated with SF completed exams (4<sup>th</sup> Qtr CY 2024-Scheduling Data)





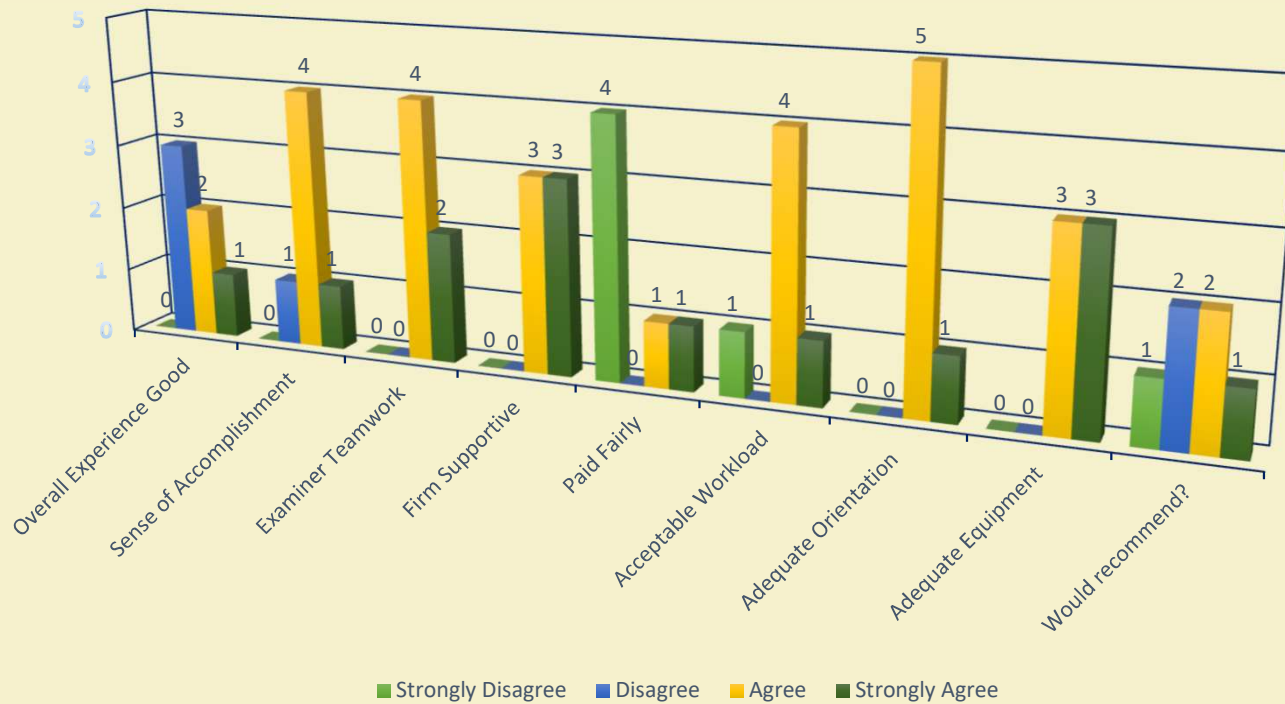
# CY 2024 IME Complaints Summary



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

- 145 Complaints
- Top Specialties:
  - Orthopedic Surgeon (60)
  - Neurology (24)
  - Psychiatry (13)
  - Occ Med (6)

# Examiner Exit Survey (6 Responses CY 2024)



# Questions?



# IME Quality Review Recap

Tanya Weber, BSN, RN  
IME Occupational Nurse Consultant

# Reasons an IME can be requested

## Claim allowance

- *To determine if the condition is related to the industrial injury or occupational disease*

## Reopening

- *Evaluate whether the injury or disease/illness has worsened and whether the worker would benefit from additional treatment*

## New Medical Issue

- *Evaluate what conditions are related to the injury or disease/illness; determine whether an industrial injury or occupational disease/illness has worsened a preexisting condition and the extent of that worsening*

# Reasons an IME can be requested contd.

## Case progress

- *Outline a treatment program when treatment or progress is controversial or when treatment occurs over an extended period of time with no change in objective findings; determine whether an injured worker meets OMD surgical guidelines; establish when the injury or disease/illness has reached maximum medical improvement*

## Appeal

- *To resolve a protest or appeal*

## Permanent Partial Disability

- *Determine the extent of total body impairment (category rating) or loss of bodily function when maximum medical improvement has been reached*

## Work Restrictions

- *Determine the worker's ability to return to work; review job analyses in light of the medical condition*

# Historical Data 2019-2024

We have been formally conducting clinical reviews of IMEs and capturing data relevant to those reviews since January of 2019.

These include:

➤ <i>SF</i>	3,706
➤ <i>SI</i>	497
➤ <i>Telehealth</i>	<u>488</u>
➤ <i>TOTAL</i>	4,691

## Your Input is Valuable & Vital

- *IME educational resources – are there specific areas you'd like to see addressed?*
- *Quality data trends – what would be meaningful for Roundtable participants?*
- Please email ideas to [Tanya.Weber@lni.wa.gov](mailto:Tanya.Weber@lni.wa.gov).



# Questions?



# IME Firm Medical Director Requirements

- IME firms (partnerships, corporations or other legal entities) that derive income from independent medical examinations must:
  - Have a medical director
    - Must be a licensed medical physician and surgeon (MD) or osteopathic physician and surgeon (DO)
    - Must have a Washington state medical license
    - Must be a department approved independent medical examiner

# IME Firm Medical Director Responsibilities

- The medical director's responsibilities include:
  - Oversight of the quality of independent medical examinations, impairment ratings and reports conducted by examiners through the IME firm
  - Availability to resolve any issue that department staff may bring to the medical director's attention
    - For example, multiple-examiner IME with conflicting opinions
    - It is important that examiners recognize that conflicts in their findings can hinder the ability to move the claim forward.
    - If IME examiners have conflicting opinions, the panel must consult with each other to discuss and see if an agreement can be made.
    - If an agreement cannot be reached, the medical director should be consulted to see if the panel can come to an agreed conclusion.
    - If, after consulting with the medical director, agreement still cannot be achieved, the IME report must discuss the reason(s) for the disagreement and provide objective findings that supports each panel member's opinion.

## Discussion — IME Firm Quality Assurance

- Role of Medical Director in your firm? Review of every report?
- Best practices?
- Willing to share your Quality Assurance procedures?
- Opportunities to strengthen MEH language around quality assurance?

# Questions?



# IME Recording Implementation Update

- **RCW 51.36.070 effective 7/1/23, giving workers the right to record IMEs**
- **WA is a dual consent state for recording (both parties must agree to recording); some examiners placing co-recording as condition to allow worker to record**
- **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**

# Next steps...

- Department will be 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:

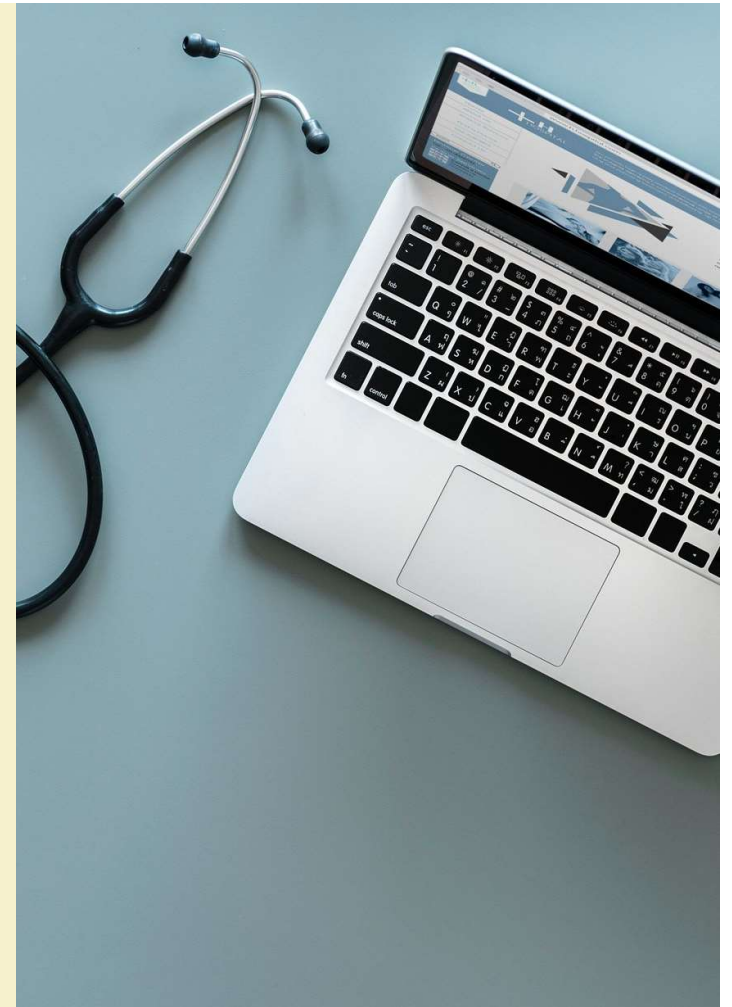
- Workers may opt to use this service in lieu of using their own device to record
  - Examiners may use service if a worker affirmatively agrees to co-recording
- Pilot will help inform any future rulemaking efforts or changes to IME policies.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Recording Pilot

- 6 month duration (March 1- August 31st 2025)
- Kickoff Zoom meeting for all interested parties:

**February 11<sup>th</sup> from 9-10:30AM**

- User training opportunities:
  - 2/20 9-10AM
  - 2/27 8:30-9:30AM

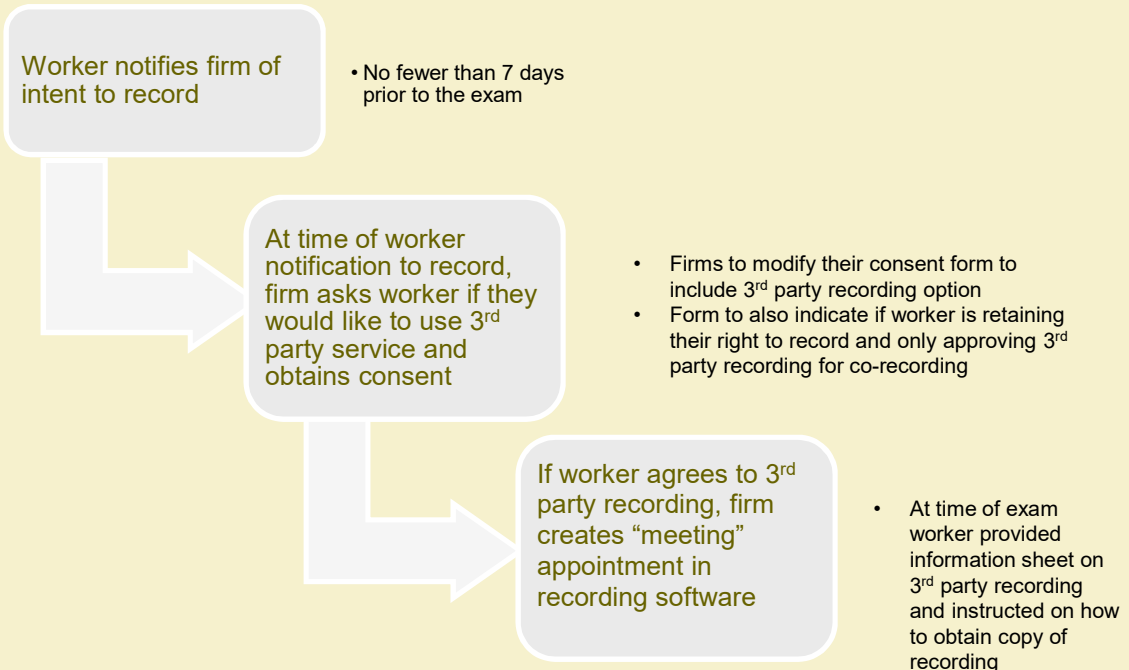




# Implementation Plan...

- Firm Readiness
  - Obtain inventory of firms and examiners willing to participate
- Develop guidance for firms on offering 3<sup>rd</sup> party option to workers for recording or co-recording\*
  - \*if worker still wants to create their own recording and agrees to allow examiner to co-record
- Communication and outreach
  - Communications from L&I to external partners describing pilot and how to participate

# Soliciting Use of 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Recording by IME Firms



DRAFT

## INDEPENDENT MEDICAL EXAM (IME) 3RD PARTY RECORDING PILOT FACT SHEET



Thank you for participating in our pilot.

The Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) is offering 3rd party recording (recording done by an independent party) as an option for injured workers and IME providers wishing to record exams. The pilot runs from March 1, 2025 through August 31, 2025.

### Am I still able to record my exam?

Yes, a worker can record the audio, video, or both during an IME ordered under RCW 51.36.070 or by the Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals (BIIA). The 3rd party recording option is being made available if you would prefer not having to use your own recording device.

### Can the IME provider record the exam?

Yes, the IME provider may record and choose to use the 3rd party recording option during the pilot if:

- Worker gives affirmative consent.

### Who is the 3rd party recording vendor and will recordings be securely stored?

The Medical Memory is the 3rd party recording pilot vendor. Their system is Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliant. Storage and release of recordings meet HIPAA and state privacy and security provisions.

### How do I request a copy of the recording?

Email L&I at: [IMETHirdPartyRecording@lni.wa.gov](mailto:IMETHirdPartyRecording@lni.wa.gov). In email, please identify the date of the IME and your email address. Our 3rd party recording vendor (The Medical Memory) will then email you a secure link to download the recording.

We would like your feedback on this pilot. Please send any comments to: [IMETHirdPartyRecording@lni.wa.gov](mailto:IMETHirdPartyRecording@lni.wa.gov).

## Recording exam...

- Written affirmative consent previously obtained or updated at time of exam
- Examiner uses their personal or firm issued device to open link created for the exam
- Verbal consent is obtained at beginning of recording by examiner, worker, and observer (if applicable)
- Worker given fact sheet on 3<sup>rd</sup> party recording

# Discussion – Feedback on Pilot



# 10 Minute Break...



# Interpreter Scheduling

Cristy Miller

## 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 2<sup>nd</sup>**.
- **CTS Language Link** on-demand, telephonic interpreter services are available through **February 28<sup>th</sup>**.

## WordBridge On-Demand

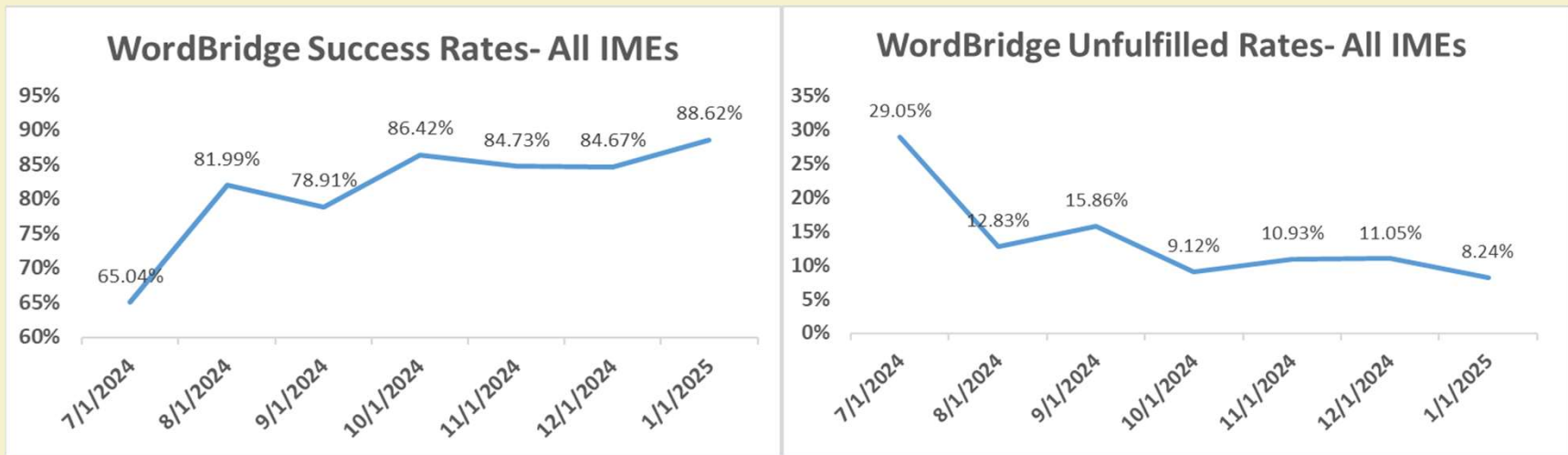
- These services may be used as a backup when an in-person interpreter has not been secured
- Providers must be registered in WordBridge in order to access on-demand telephonic interpretation services
  - [WordBridge On-Demand Provider User Guide](#)



# Onboarding of Providers and Interpreters



# IME Success and Unfulfilled Rates



## SOSi's Role

- L&I's coordinating entity
- Provide all on-demand and scheduled interpretation services needed during medical and vocational appointments in all languages and preferred methods of interpretation
- Manage quality of interpretation services
- Comply with L&I's payment policy
- Bill for interpretation services and distribute payment to interpreters after receiving payment from the insurer (L&I, self-insured employer/TPA, Crime Victims Compensation program)

## Interpreters' Role

- Interpret what is said during a visit and ask questions if needed
- Respect confidentiality
- Follow the DSHS code of ethics [WAC 388-03-050](#)
- Comply with all safety and security requirements of the facilities they work in
- Comply with L&I's quality assurance plan/[L&I Incident Resolution Process \(IRP\) for LAPs](#) effective November 1<sup>st</sup>.

## IME Provider's Role

- Identify the need for interpretation services
- Provide interpretation services to injured workers and crime victims
- When scheduling interpreter services through WordBridge:
  - Enter the correct appointment, insurer, appointment duration, and claim information
  - Only request interpretation services for L&I and self-insurance requested exams.
  - Make any changes to the interpreter request (i.e., reschedule, cancel, edit)
  - Check-in and out the interpreters for the appointment
- Report any interpreter quality assurance issues to SOSi such as late cancelations, no-shows, and inappropriate interpreter behavior.

## Contact Information

- SOSi's helpdesk for general questions:
  - Email: [Support@wordbridge.io](mailto:Support@wordbridge.io)
  - Phone: 1-888-224-0126
- For any interpreter quality assurance feedback: [Feedback@wordbridge.io](mailto:Feedback@wordbridge.io)
- To request an on-demand telephonic interpreter: 1-833-748-0032
- L&I Interpretation Services: [Interpretation@Lni.wa.gov](mailto:Interpretation@Lni.wa.gov)

# Questions?



## **Claims Department** – Nancy Adams

- Nothing new to report, are there any Claims Questions?



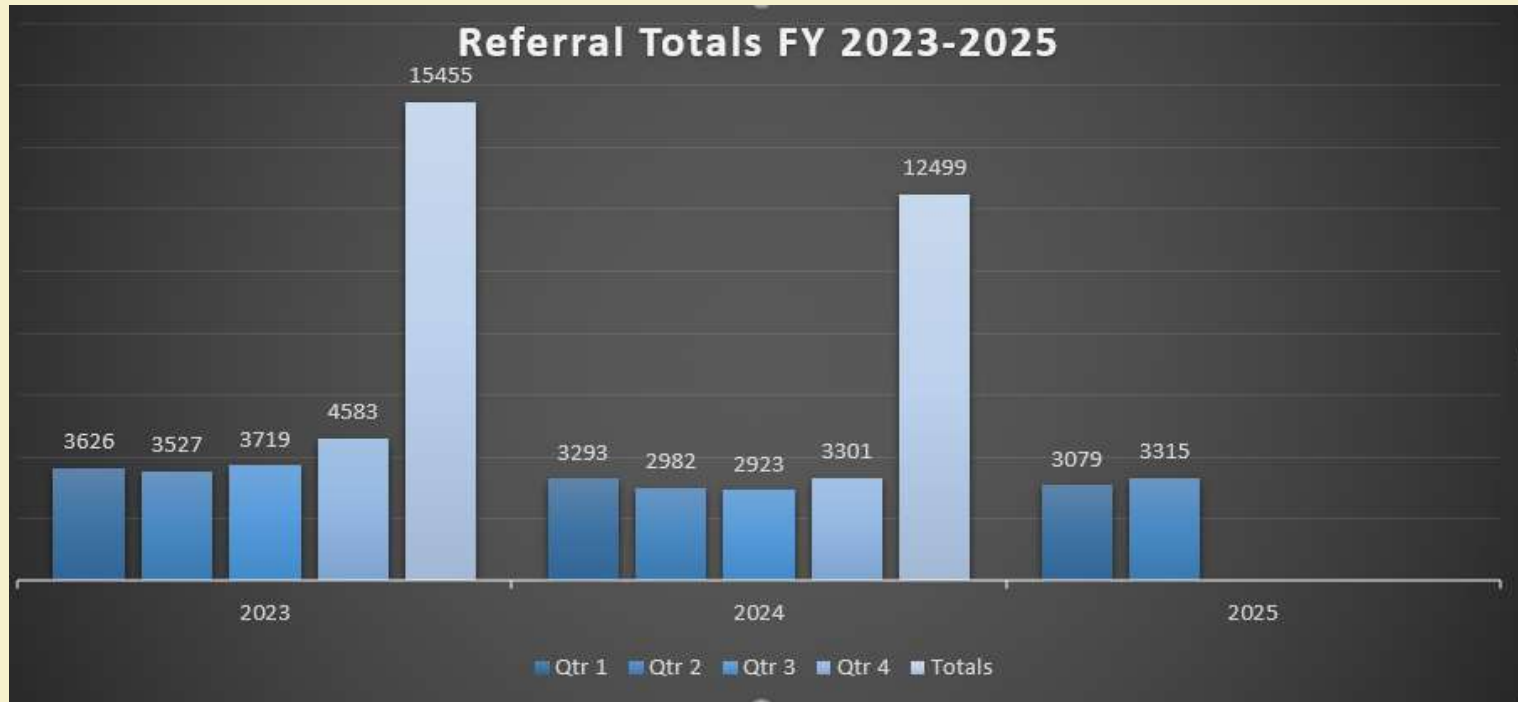
## **Self-Insurance – LaNae Lien**

- Self-Insurance Questions?

# **IME Scheduling Trends**

Shannon Rushing

There were a total of 3315 referrals created in FY QTR 2 2025



# New Data on Reschedules

- Intent To Record Report

# Questions?



# Open Discussion – IME Providers

- Questions & Comments
- Future Topic Suggestions
- Next Meeting:  
*May 08, 2025*