

DWC Quarterly Meeting

October 22, 2025 – 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.



Agenda

- Welcome.
- Operations update.
- Business Process update.
- Communications update.
- Compliance and Investigations update.
- Claims and Customer Services update.
- Q&A.
- Closing remarks.

Welcome

Jeff Nelson, Commissioner of Workers' Compensation



Operations update

Mary Landrum, Deputy Commissioner of Operations



Office of the Medical Advisor (OMA) update

Jennifer Self, Manager of Health Quality Review



AMA 6th edition study guides

Phase I

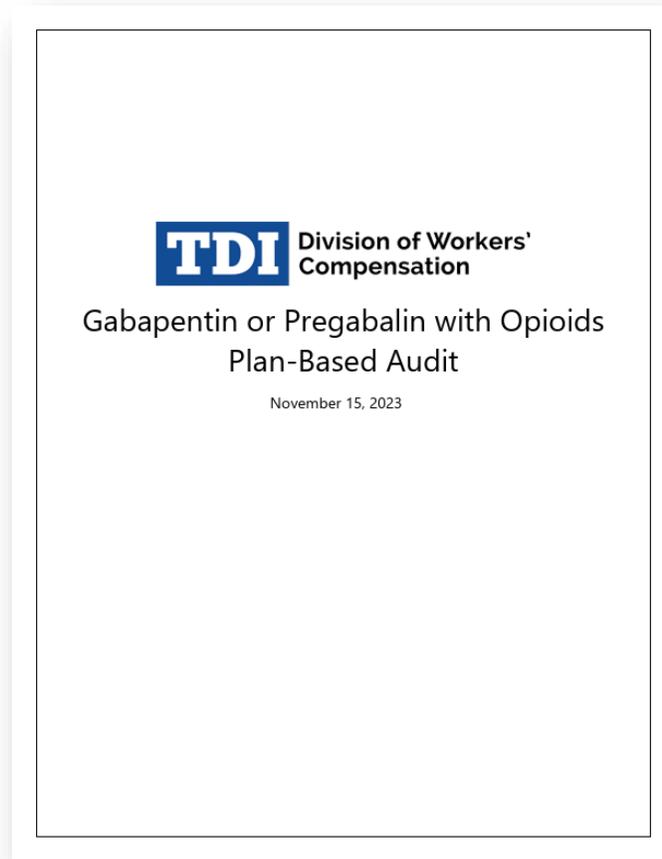
OMA completed re-rating cases.

Phase II

REG analyzing data to complete study.

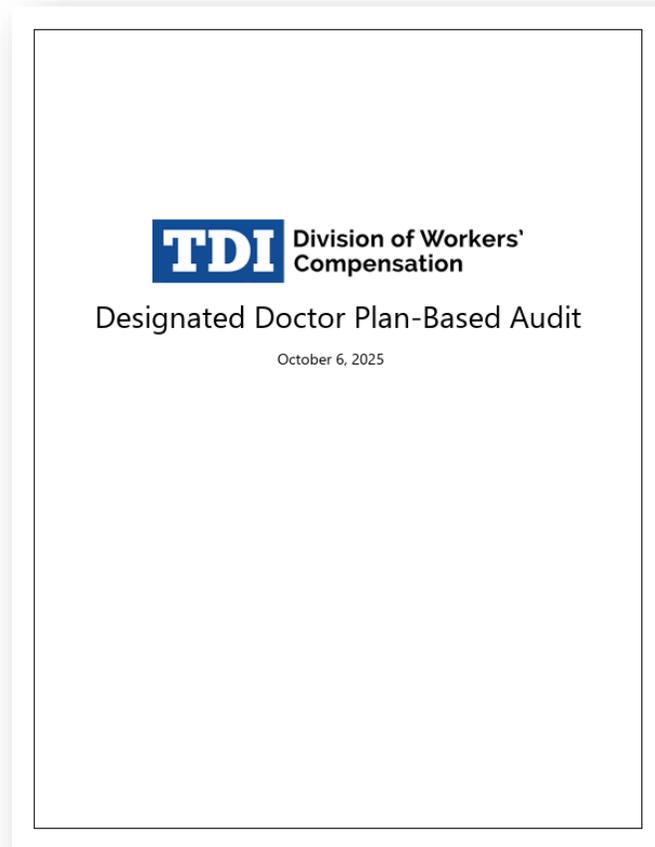
Expect completion date in 2026.

Gabapentin/pregabalin plan-based audit



- [Posted](#) November 15, 2023.
- Ten subjects with five cases per subject. Of those:
 - Three reviews closed without further action.
 - Seven reviews closed with letters of education.

Designated doctor (DD) plan-based audit



- Comment period: Two weeks
- Deadline: October 20, 2025

2026 Annual audit plan

- Preparation underway to identify possible topics.
- Will be posted for public input.

Health care provider PBO assessment

Health care provider PBO assessment for return-to-work measure almost complete

- 385** assessments reviewed
- 145** closed as acceptable
- 240** pending for additional information

Medical Quality Review Panel (MQRP) nominations

- MQRP nominations needed.
- DD designation preferred.
- Specialties needed:
 - Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.
 - Psychiatrists.
 - Ortho-Spine.

The screenshot shows the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) website. The header includes the TDI logo and the text "Texas Department of Insurance". A search bar is visible with the text "ENHANCED BY Google". Below the header, there are navigation tabs for "Insurance", "State Fire Marshal", and "Workers' Compensation". The "Workers' Compensation" tab is selected. The main content area is titled "Office of the Medical Advisor" and contains text about the "Texas Labor Code" and the "Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC)". Below this, there is a section for "DWC Medical Advisor" featuring a photo of Graves T. Owen, M.D., and a brief biography. At the bottom of the page, there is a section titled "Medical Quality Review Panel applicants" with a blue "APPLY NOW" button and two steps: "Step 1 Review the MQRP application process" and "Step 2 Apply here: MQRP application".

Scroll to the bottom of our OMA [page](#) to apply.

HCP/RTW Outreach update

Amy Rich, Director of HCP/RTW Outreach



DD and other workers' compensation specific exams

Reminder: 28 TAC Sections [134.235](#), [134.240](#), [134.250](#), and [134.260](#) for billing workers' compensation specific exams have been revised.

- Review the modifiers that are currently required and stop using the modifiers that have been deleted (RE, SP, TC, 26, WP, V1, and V2).
- Assignment numbers are required for all medical bills for DDs and any health care provider performing testing for a DD.

DD and other workers' compensation specific exams

Reminder: 28 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Section [134.210\(e\)](#) states that doctors must bill and be reimbursed the MAR (maximum allowable amount).

- DDs (and other doctors) need to pay attention to the current year's MAR for their exams. Each year the exam fees change.
- Insurance carriers should reimburse the MAR even if the doctor is using the incorrect exam fee amounts.

DD and other workers' compensation specific exams

Training and resource materials:

- [Designated Doctor Billing and Reimbursement Training 2024 | DWC On-Demand Training](#) (video).
- [Billing and Reimbursement Training for Designated Doctor and Other Certifying Doctor Exams](#) (slides).
- [Designated Doctor and MMI/IR Fees Training - Definitions, Acronyms, and Billing Cheat Sheets](#) (handout #1).
- [Health care providers receiving referrals from designated doctors](#) (handout #2).
- [Certifying and Designated Doctor Exam Fees](#) (webpage).

Designated Doctor update

Santiago Calderon, Director of Designated Doctor Operations



DD report templates

General

**Maximum medical
improvement
(MMI)**

**Impairment rating
(IR)**

**Extent of injury
(EOI)**

Disability

**Return to work
(RTW)**

**RTW for
supplemental
income benefits
(SIBs)**

Other issues

DD report templates

TDI Texas Department of Insurance

ENHANCED BY Google

Topics: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z All

Insurance State Fire Marshal **Workers' Compensation**

Home Employees Español Employers Safety Health Care Providers Carriers Media / Public

What is a designated doctor?

A designated doctor (DD) is a doctor or health care provider selected and trained by DWC to resolve questions about an injured employee's medical condition; or a dispute about a work-related injury or illness. The injured employee, the employee's representative, or insurance carrier, or DWC can request a DD exam. DWC decides if a DD should be appointed to conduct the exam. [View video.](#)

Narrative report templates [Narrative reports by exam type](#) | [Watch the video](#)

Designated doctor program

Become a designated doctor or renew certification

You must take the required training, pass the required test (on 5/13/13 or after) and apply. Renewal requires attending required training and reapplying every two years.

Designated doctors must subscribe to, own or have access to the following required guidelines:

- [MDGuidelines](#) (MDG) or call 800-442-4519.
- [Official Disability Guidelines](#) (ODG) or call 800-488-5548.
- AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment, 4th Edition.
 - Online [AMA Guides](#) (4th – 6th included, use 4th edition only).

Find templates on DD webpage:



DD trainings

October

- **10/24:** DD 101 workshop (Austin).

November

- **11/7-11/8:** DD and certifying doctor required certification training.
- **11/14:** Extent of injury webinar.

Go to calendar:



DD resources

Webpages:

- [DD program homepage](#).
- [DWC training calendar](#).
- [DD narrative report templates video](#).
- [DD narrative report and form requirements chart](#).

Email addresses:

- DDScheduler@tdi.texas.gov.
- DDRecords@tdi.texas.gov.

Business Process update

Tammy Campion, Deputy Commissioner of Business Process



2025 Income Benefits Report

Tammy Campion, Deputy Commissioner of Business Process



Overview

- This report analyzed the amount of income benefits received by injured employees from 2015 to 2022 and broke these into several characterizations, such as year, industry, and age.
- Income benefits included in report:
 - Temporary income benefits (TIBs).
 - Impairment income benefits (IIBs).
 - Supplemental income benefits (SIBs).
 - Lifetime income benefits (LIBs).
 - Death benefits (DBs).
- Overall: income benefit replacement rates remained stable.
- New tax regulations went into effect in 2018 that increased after-tax earnings for employees. These regulations are reflected the data, but ultimately return to pre-2018 levels.

Key findings: TIBs



Income replacement rate from 2015 to 2022:

↓ 2%

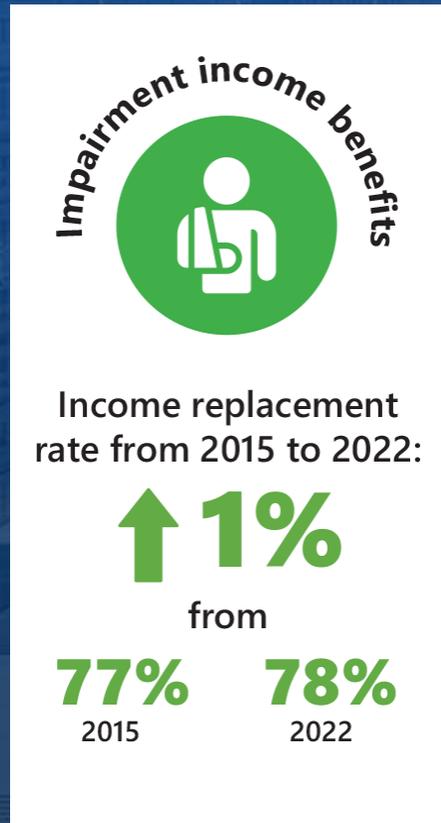
from

82%
2015

80%
2022

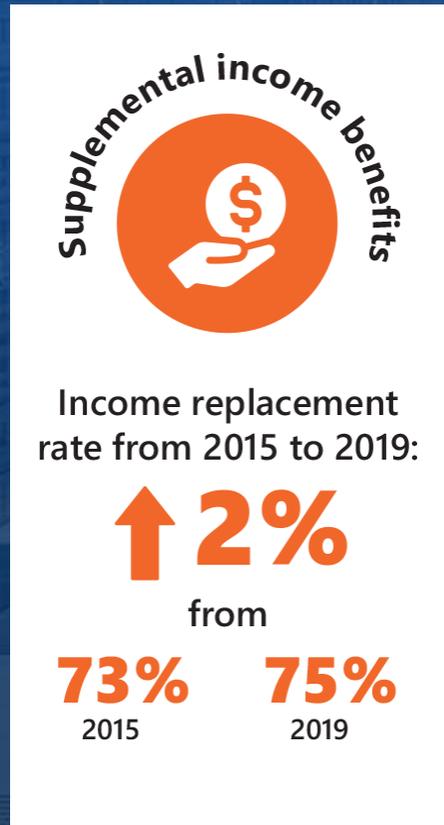
- **Income replacement rate (IRR)** is the percentage amount of how much the injured employee's pre-injury wages are replaced by an income benefit.
- **Eligibility:** TIBs begin once an injured employee loses more than seven days of work due to a work-related injury or illness.

Key findings: IIBs



- **Eligibility:** An injured employee is eligible for IIBs when they reach maximum medical improvement, and they are assigned an impairment rating (IR) greater than zero.
- **Benefit amount:** 70% of the injured employee's average weekly wage.
- An injured employee receives three weeks of IIBs for every percentage of impairment. An IR rating of 5% would receive 15 weeks of IIBs.

Key findings: SIBs



- **Eligibility:** SIBs occur once IIBs have ended. To receive SIBs, an injured employee must have:
 - An IR of 15% or more.
 - Not returned to work or are earning less than 80% of the average weekly wage in this position.
 - Proof of looking for work.
 - Not accepted a lump sum payment for the injury.

Key findings: LIBs



Average income replacement rate from 2015 to 2022:

77%

- **Eligibility:** LIBs are given to injured employees who suffer a major injury which will permanently affect them for the rest of their lives and hinder their ability to work at pre-injury wages, such as total loss of eyesight to both eyes.
- **Benefit amount:** LIBs are 75% of the injured employee's average weekly wage, with a 3% increase each year.

Key findings: DBs

Death benefits

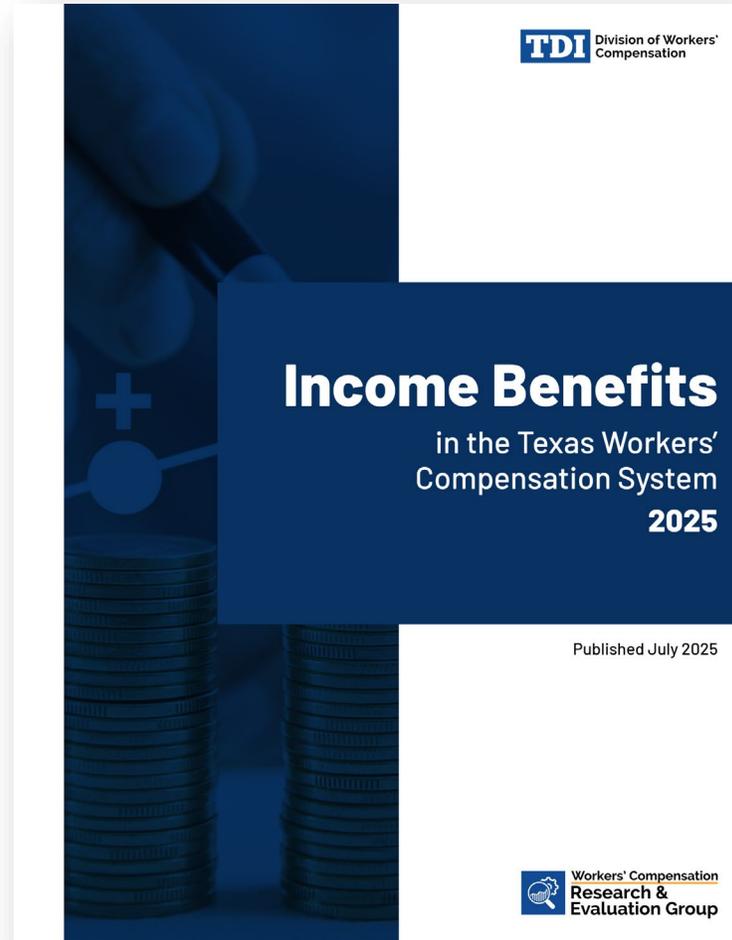


Average income replacement rate from 2015 to 2022:

83%

- DBs help the injured employee's beneficiary replace some of the money lost when an employee dies because of a work-related injury or illness.
- **Benefit amount:** DBs are 75% of the deceased employee's average weekly wage. There are maximum and minimum benefits limits. The beneficiary will receive DBs for life if certain conditions are met.

Read the full report



Read now:



Performance Based Oversight and DD Exam Services update

Martha Luevano, Director Enterprise Automation Services



2025 Health care provider PBO

- The DWC Form-069 part of the assessment is complete.
 - Final tier ratings have been sent to health care providers.
- The DWC Form-073 part of the assessment is ongoing
 - DWC sent the results to health care providers on September 19.
 - The deadline for rebuttals was October 20.
 - ✓ Reminders about the rebuttal deadline were sent on October 7 and 8.
- Overall results and tier ratings will be published in November.

DD exam services (DDES)

- The team that processes and approves requests for designated doctor examinations (DWC Form-032) and change in treating doctor requests (DWC Form-053) moved to EAS effective September 1, 2025.
- DDES staff now report to the Director for Enterprise Automation Services.
- There is no change for stakeholders – continue to file forms, fax and email as usual.
- Questions? Contact Manager for DDES joy.nwokocha@tdi.texas.gov or Director for EAS martha.luevano@tdi.texas.gov.

Communications update

Kara Mace, General Counsel, Legal and Communications Services



Thanks for attending this year's conference!



510 attendees



14 speakers



14 sessions



69 exhibitors



Join us next year!

When: September 1-2,
2026

Where: Embassy Suites
San Marcos

**Sign up for conference
updates email list.**

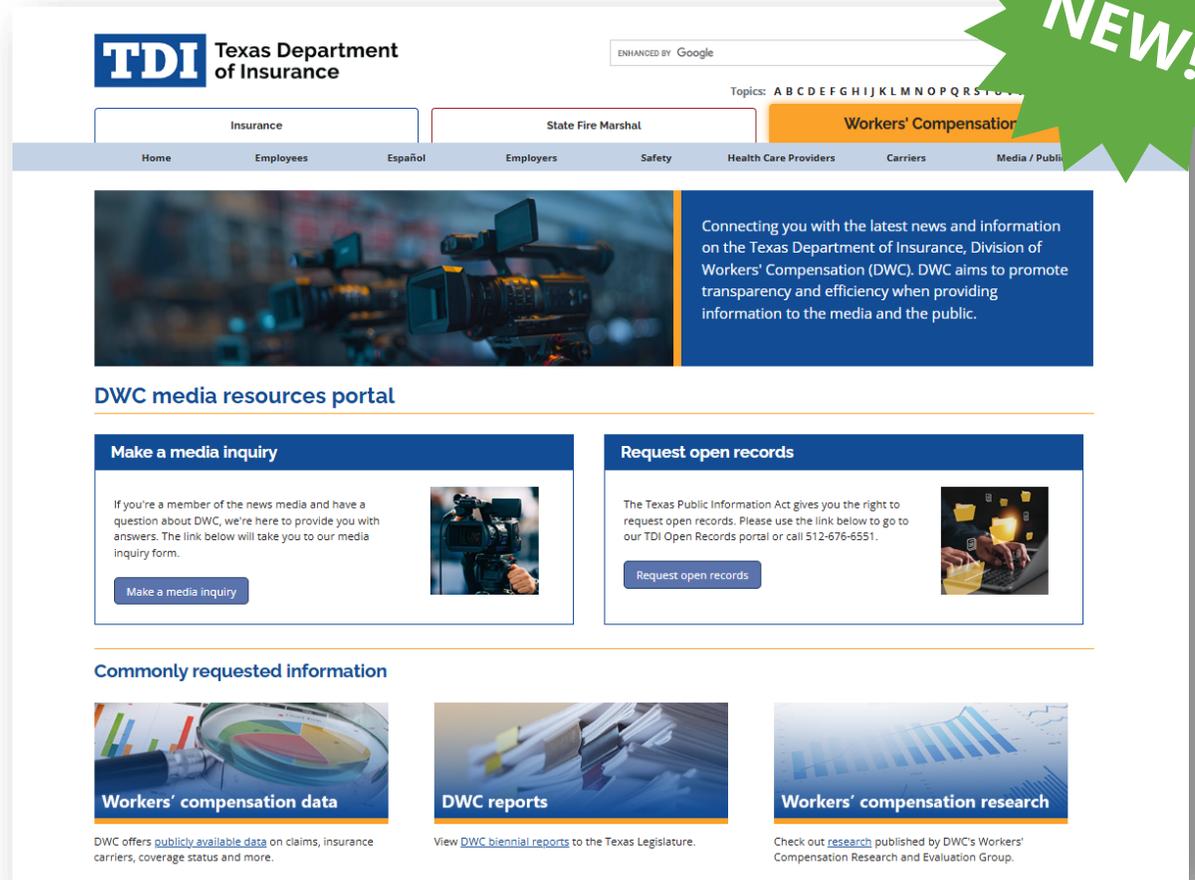


Media resources portal

New webpage for the media and the public to easily:

- Make a media inquiry.
- Request open records.
- View commonly requested DWC information.

Visit:



NEW!

TDI Texas Department of Insurance

ENHANCED BY Google

Topics: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Insurance State Fire Marshal **Workers' Compensation**

Home Employees Español Employers Safety Health Care Providers Carriers Media / Public

Connecting you with the latest news and information on the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC). DWC aims to promote transparency and efficiency when providing information to the media and the public.

DWC media resources portal

Make a media inquiry

If you're a member of the news media and have a question about DWC, we're here to provide you with answers. The link below will take you to our media inquiry form.

[Make a media inquiry](#)

Request open records

The Texas Public Information Act gives you the right to request open records. Please use the link below to go to our TDI Open Records portal or call 512-676-6551.

[Request open records](#)

Commonly requested information

Workers' compensation data

DWC offers [publicly available data](#) on claims, insurance carriers, coverage status and more.

DWC reports

View [DWC biennial reports](#) to the Texas Legislature.

Workers' compensation research

Check out [research](#) published by DWC's Workers' Compensation Research and Evaluation Group.

Compliance and Investigations update

Connor Ambrosini, Lead Attorney, Enforcement



FY 2025 complaints

2,043 complaints received

- 8** attendance
- 682** communications
- 621** indemnity benefit delivery
- 355** medical benefit delivery
- 300** other
- 77** quality of care

1,909 complaints closed

- 476** confirmed
- 438** letter of education (low risk)
- 995** not confirmed

Based on data as of 08/31/2025.

FY 2025 – complaints received by respondent type

Type of complaint	Injured employee	Insurance carrier	Health care provider	Employer	Attorney	Other
Attendance	1	2	5	0	0	0
Communications	3	325	202	130	13	9
Indemnity benefits	0	612	0	7	1	0
Medical benefits	0	251	105	0	0	0
Quality of care	N/A	0	77	N/A	N/A	0
Other	3	104	30	138	2	23

Based on complaint data as of 08/31/25.

FY 2025 compliance audits

Death benefits/lifetime income benefits (LIBs)

Initial payment of temporary income benefits (TIBs)

Medical bill processing

18 completed

22 completed

19 completed

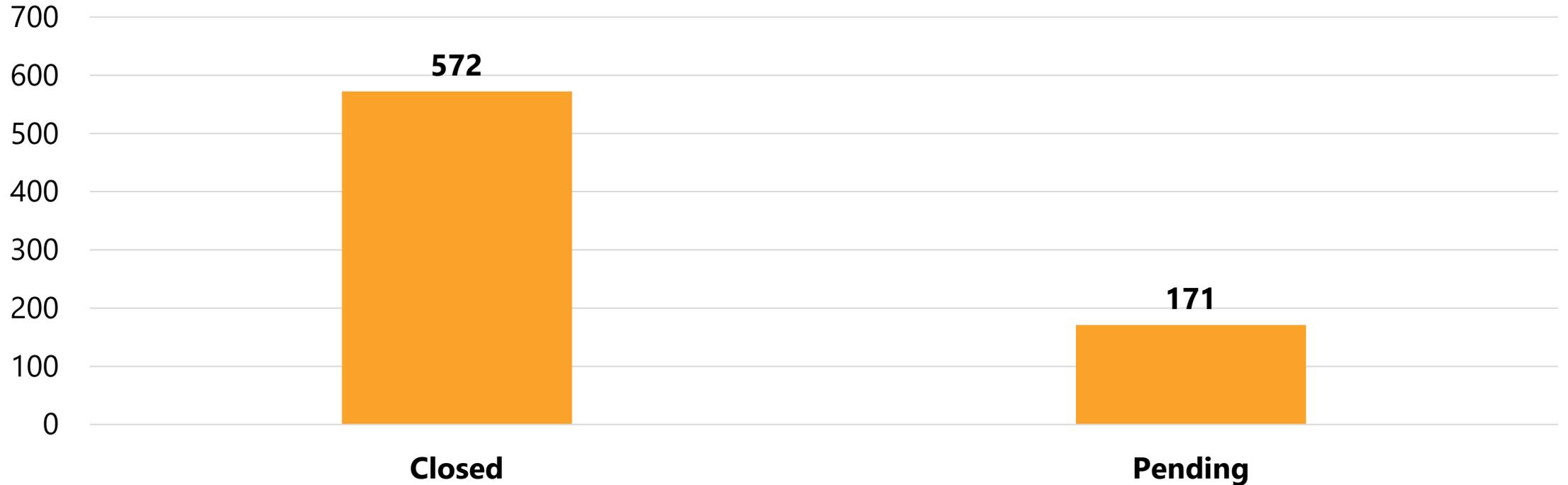
Based on complaint data as of 08/31/25.

Total money to system participants

\$2.4 million

\$316,365 to injured employees or beneficiaries after LIBs/DBs audits.

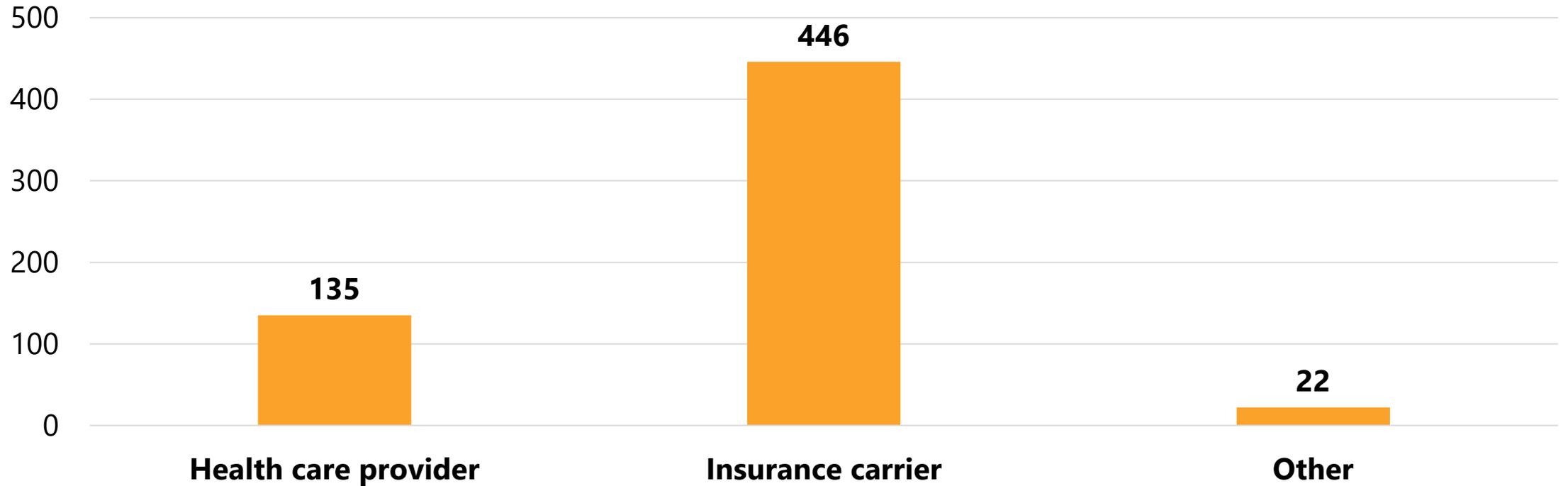
FY 2025 – enforcement case status



FY 2025	Closed cases	Pending cases
Cases	572	171

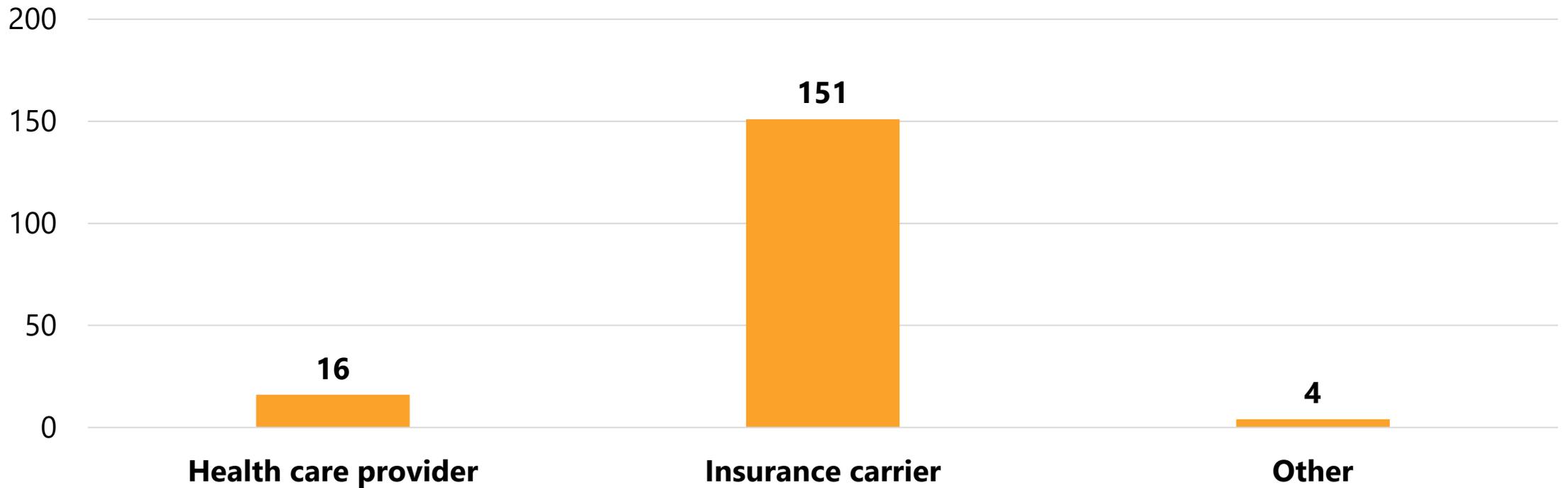
Based on enforcement data as of 10/02/25.

FY 2025 – cases closed by subject type



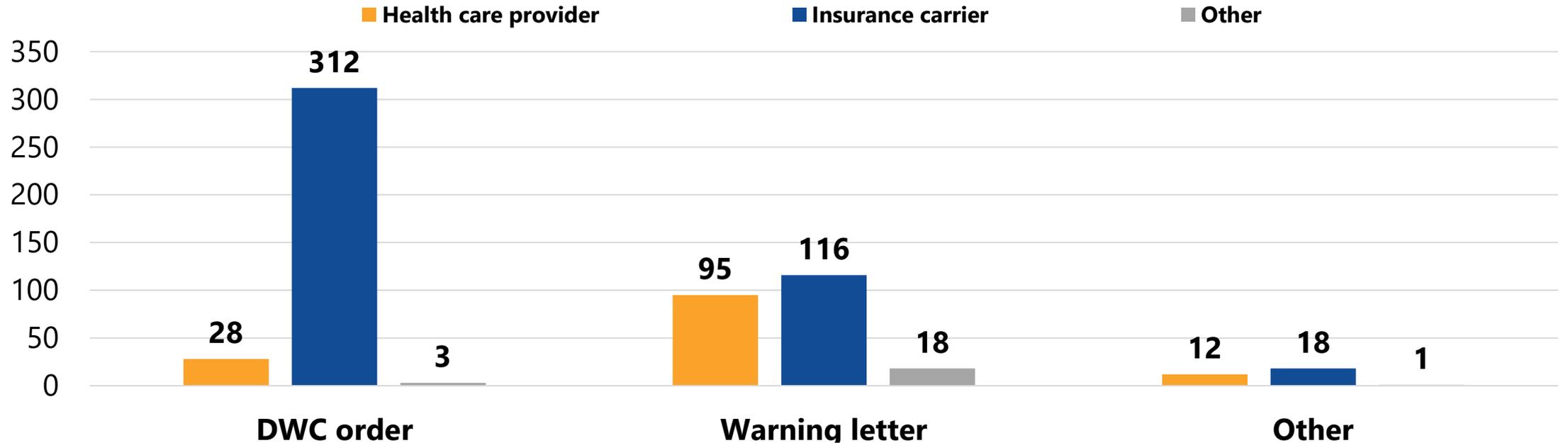
Based on enforcement data as of 10/02/25.

FY 2025 – cases pending by subject type



Based on enforcement data as of 10/02/25.

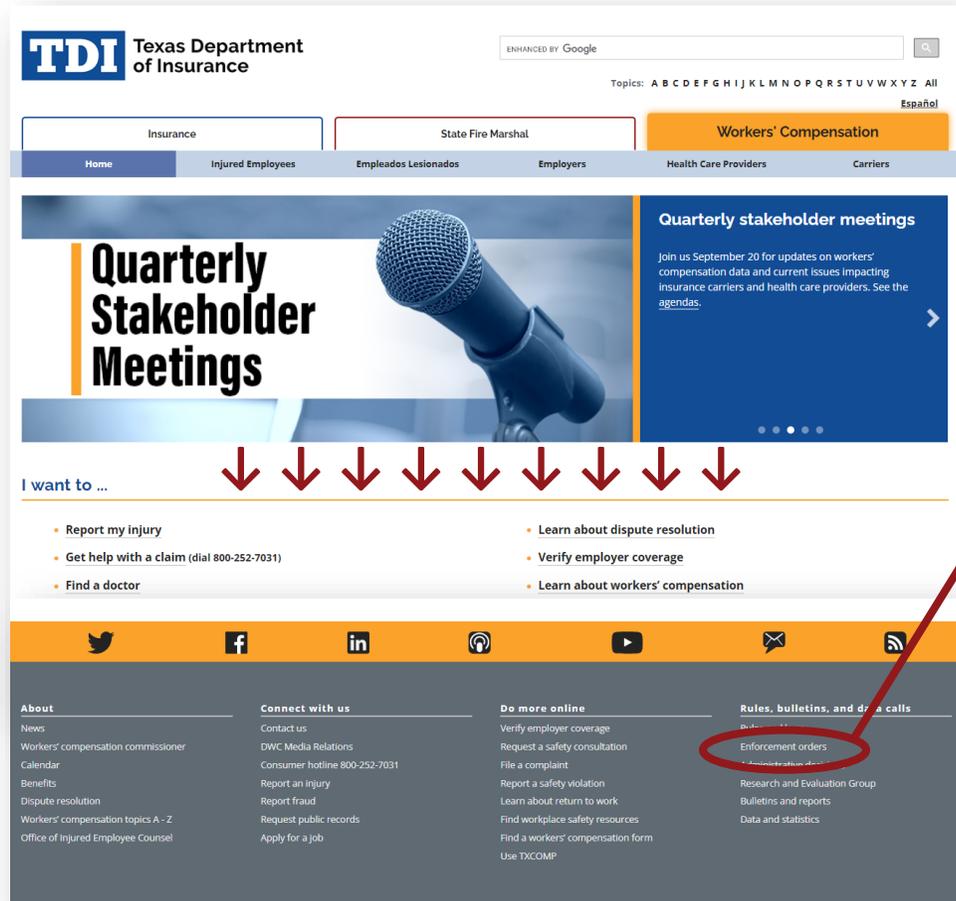
FY 2025 – cases closed by disposition type



FY 2025	Health care provider	Insurance carrier	Other
DWC Order	28	312	3
Warning Letter	95	116	18
Other	12	18	1

Based on enforcement data as of 10/02/25.

Enforcement orders webpage



Scroll to bottom of [DWC homepage](#) and click "Enforcement orders".

or

Visit www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/orders/index.html.

FY 2025 DWC Fraud and Prosecution

1,629 fraud referrals received

49 fraud cases opened for investigation

43 fraud cases closed

4 fraud cases indicted/charged

\$101,500 restitution ordered by the courts

Based on data as of 08/31/2025.

FY 2025 DWC Fraud and Prosecution

4 successful prosecutions

- 2 claimants
- 1 beneficiary
- 1 employer

Based on data as of 08/31/2025.

Quick facts

- DWC entered into 26 consent orders involving death benefits in FY 2025.
 - 24 cases were from audits.
 - 2 cases were from complaints.
- Noncompliance for the 24 death benefit audits ranged from 14% to 75%.
- Average penalty assessed for the 24 death benefit audits = \$38,992.

FY 2022

- 252 cases closed with sanction (DWC order).
- 13 death benefit orders.

FY 2023

- 611 cases closed with sanction.
- 35 death benefit orders.

FY 2024

- 463 cases closed with sanction.
- 13 death benefit orders.

FY 2025

- 343 cases closed with sanction.
- 26 death benefit orders.

DB consent orders

- Enforcement resolved 572 total cases with action in FY 2025.
- Only 26 were death benefit consent orders.
- These **26 death benefit cases** accounted for **43%** of the total value of penalties assessed in FY 2025.

Update: carrier scorecards

- Scorecards used to reflect all complaints received, regardless of outcome.
- Now carrier scorecards will only reflect confirmed complaints.
- Thanks for bringing this to our attention!



Questions?

Dan.LaBruyere@tdi.texas.gov



Division of Workers'
Compensation

Claims and Customer Services update

Teresa Johnson, Director of Outreach and Claims Services



What is a catastrophic incident?

An event in which there are multiple injuries or fatalities, or the possibility of pandemic-type exposure to a disease resulting in multiple sicknesses or deaths.

Examples:

- Natural disasters.
- Accidental events such as transportation accidents, industrial explosions, or chemical spills.
- Active shooter attacks.

Why having a plan matters



**Promotes
transparency and
collaboration with
all claim parties**



**Reduces the need
for formal dispute
resolution**

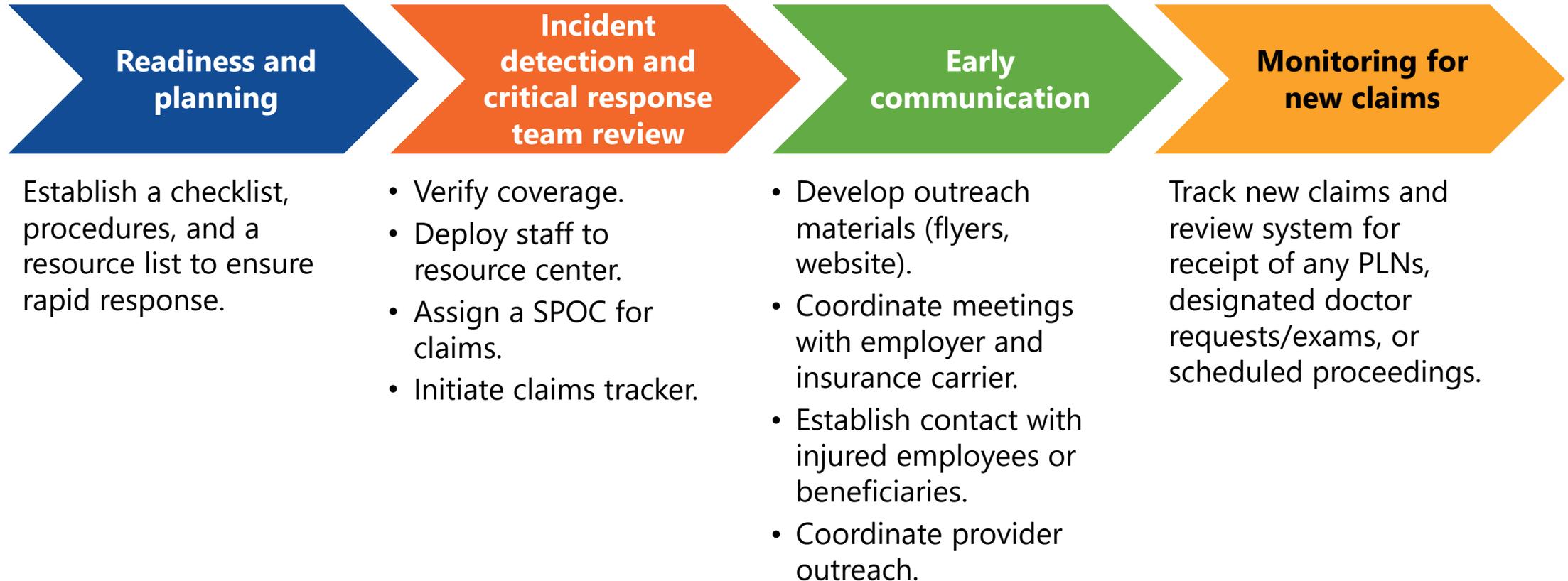


**Ensures
compliance**



**Enables faster
recovery and more
efficient claims
processing**

DWC response framework



Current incident overview

DWC is currently tracking **six** catastrophic incidents:

- Two natural disasters.
- Two active shooter events at schools.
- An industrial explosion.
- A scaffolding collapse.

DWC has two dedicated Single-Point-of-Contacts to facilitate communication.

Next steps

- Prioritize early communication with insurance carriers and system participants.
- Strengthen engagement with local, state, and federal agencies.
- Reinforce the importance of having a response plan in place.

Questions?

TDI Division of Workers'
Compensation

Closing remarks

Jeff Nelson, Commissioner of Workers' Compensation

