

DWC Quarterly Meeting

July 15, 2025 – 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

TDI Division of Workers'
Compensation

Agenda

- Welcome.
- Health and Safety update.
- Business Process update.
- External Relations update.
- Communications update.
- Compliance and Investigations update.
- Hearings update.
- Q&A.
- Closing remarks.

Welcome

Jeff Nelson, Commissioner of Workers' Compensation



Health and Safety update

Mary Landrum, Deputy Commissioner of Health and Safety



CY25 Annual audit plan update

- [PBO 2025 Assessment Plan - HCP RTW Measure.](#)
- Designated doctor reports and the necessity of additional testing or referrals ordered by designated doctors to resolve the issue in question.
- Study to evaluate the feasibility and impact of adopting a more current version of the American Medical Association Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment (AMA Guides).

MMI by telemedicine and FAQs

Amy Rich, Project Manager of Health and Safety



MMI exams by telemedicine and telehealth

- Effective date was on or after June 1, 2025.
- Allows a treating doctor to perform **MMI only** exams by telemedicine and telehealth if the treating doctor has provided an exam prior to the MMI examination and the employee has consented.
- Related training video and slides are posted on HCP webpage under [on-demand videos](#).
- FAQs.

Designated Doctor (DD) 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 - general

[INSERT YOUR LETTERHEAD]

Designated Doctor Examination Narrative Report

Date:

Designated doctor name:

Designated doctor license number, type, and jurisdiction:

Designated doctor assignment number:

Exam date and time:

Exam location:

Exam start time:

Exam end time:

Time spent reviewing medical records:

Time spent on medical decision making:

DWC claim #:

Injured employee name:

Injured employee SSN (last four): XXX-XX-

Injured employee date of birth:

Date of injury:

Treating doctor name:

Employer name:

Insurance carrier name:

Carrier claim number:

Certified workers' compensation health care network or health care plan name (if any):

Issues ordered to address

(List only those issues that apply)

- Maximum Medical Improvement
- Impairment Rating
- Extent of Injury
- Disability – Direct Result
- Return to Work
- Return to Work for Supplemental Income Benefits (SIBs)
- Other Similar Issues

[INSERT YOUR LETTERHEAD]

Closing Information for all Reports

I certify that:

- I have reviewed and approved the final version of this report.
- I have no known disqualifying association as described in [28 Texas Administrative Code Section 127.140 \(relating to Disqualifying Associations\)](#) between the designated doctor (DD) and the injured employee, the injured employee's treating doctor, the insurance carrier, the insurance carrier's certified workers' compensation health care network, or a network established under [Labor Code Chapter 504](#).
- I filed this report by verifiable means with the injured employee, injured employee's representative (if any), treating doctor and insurance carrier.
- I sent copies of the report to:

The Injured Employee:

[Injured Employee Name]

[Address or Fax Number]

[Date sent]

The IE Representative (if any):

[IE Representative Name]

[Address or Fax Number]

[Date sent]

The Treating Doctor:

[Treating Doctor Name]

[Address or Fax Number]

[Date sent]

The Insurance Carrier:

[Insurance Carrier Name]

[Address or Fax Number]

[Date sent]

Designated Doctor Signature: _____

Date of Signature: _____

DD report templates - general

[INSERT YOUR LETTERHEAD]

Summary of Medical History
I reviewed the medical records and other documents provided by the insurance carrier, the treating doctor, and the injured employee. (See Attachment A.)

Time spent reviewing medical history:

Mechanism of injury:

Historical Complaints and Current Complaints:

Treatment history and injured employee's response to treatment:

Summary of medical history (discuss persistent positive and negative complaints, findings, diagnostics, and their temporal relation to the DOI):

Physical Exam
Exam findings:

[INSERT YOUR LETTERHEAD]

Referrals and Testing or Evaluation
I [sent/did not send] the injured employee to another health care provider for additional testing/evaluation necessary to complete this designated doctor exam.

Referral Health Care Provider Name	Provider License Number	Date of Service (mm/dd/yyyy)	Type of Testing
			Functional capacity evaluation (FCE), electromyography (EMG), nerve conduction velocity (NCV), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI); computed tomography (CT) Scan, Describe other testing.
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Analysis of Results of Referral for Testing or Evaluation (Explain why, what, how?)

Referral 1. (Repeat for each test or referral)
Referral health care provider name: [Name]
Date of service: [mm/dd/yyyy]
Type of referral or test: [Type]
Reason for referral or test to resolve a question: [Reason]

Analysis of referral or test findings

DD report templates – MMI & IR

Maximum medical improvement (MMI) (See DWC Form-069, Report of Medical Evaluation)

The exam requester asked whether the injured employee has reached MMI, and if so, on what date?

Yes, I certify the injured employee reached Statutory Clinical MMI on [mm/dd/yyyy] and have included documentation relating to this certification below.

No, I certify the injured employee has not reached MMI, but is expected to reach MMI on or about [mm/dd/yyyy]. The reason the injured employee has not reached MMI is documented below.

Maximum medical improvement analysis

Rationale for MMI decision:

(As part of rationale demonstrate your consideration of ODG treatment guidelines and any other evidence-based medicine.)

Impairment rating (See DWC Form-069, Report of Medical Evaluation)

The exam requester asked what is the injured employee's whole person impairment on the date of MMI?

Impairment rating analysis

Conditions for which I am certifying MMI/IR:

(As part of rationale demonstrate your consideration of AMA Guides 4th edition and any other evidence-based medicine.)

MMI and IR summaries are as follows:

(If MMI has been reached, explain how you determined the whole person impairment rating for the compensable injury as of the date of MMI.)

DD report templates - EOI

Extent of injury

The exam requester asked whether the accident or incident giving rise to the compensable injury was a substantial factor in bringing about the additional claimed diagnoses or condition, and without it, the additional diagnoses or conditions would not have occurred. This table summarizes my determination of the diagnoses or conditions listed by the requester in Box 31C of the DWC Form-032.

Diagnoses or Conditions in Question	Yes	No	Diagnosis Code 1	Diagnosis Code 2	Diagnosis Code 3	Diagnosis Code 4
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Additional diagnoses or conditions that I determined resulted from the compensable injury:

Additional diagnoses or conditions resulting from the compensable injury	Diagnosis Code 1	Diagnosis Code 2	Diagnosis Code 3	Diagnosis Code 4
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				

Extent of injury analysis

Diagnoses or injuries in question:
(State injuries in question as listed in request, and define and describe each injury in medical terms)

Accident or incident (mechanism of injury):

Clinical findings and timeline in support of causation analysis:
(Include relevant findings; detail symptom onset relative to the timeline of the medical history)

Analysis of clinical findings and timeline:
(Findings from above, and any other relevant supporting factors to explain the basis for the opinion)

Causation statement (including relevant evidence-based medicine):
(As part of rationale demonstrate your consideration of any evidence-based medicine.)

DD trainings

July

- 7/14: Case-based webinar series module 1 – MMI.
- 7/16: Case-based webinar series module 2 – spine MMI/EOI.
- 7/21: Case-based webinar series module 3 – upper MMI/IR.
- 7/23: Case-based webinar series module 4 – lower MMI/IR.

August

- 8/4: Case-based webinar series module 5 – non-musculoskeletal MMI/IR.
- 8/6: Case-based webinar series module 6 – musculoskeletal TBI.
- 8/15: Musculoskeletal exam workshop (Austin).

September

- 9/5: DD 101 workshop (Austin).
- 9/19-9/20: DD and certifying doctor required certification training.

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:

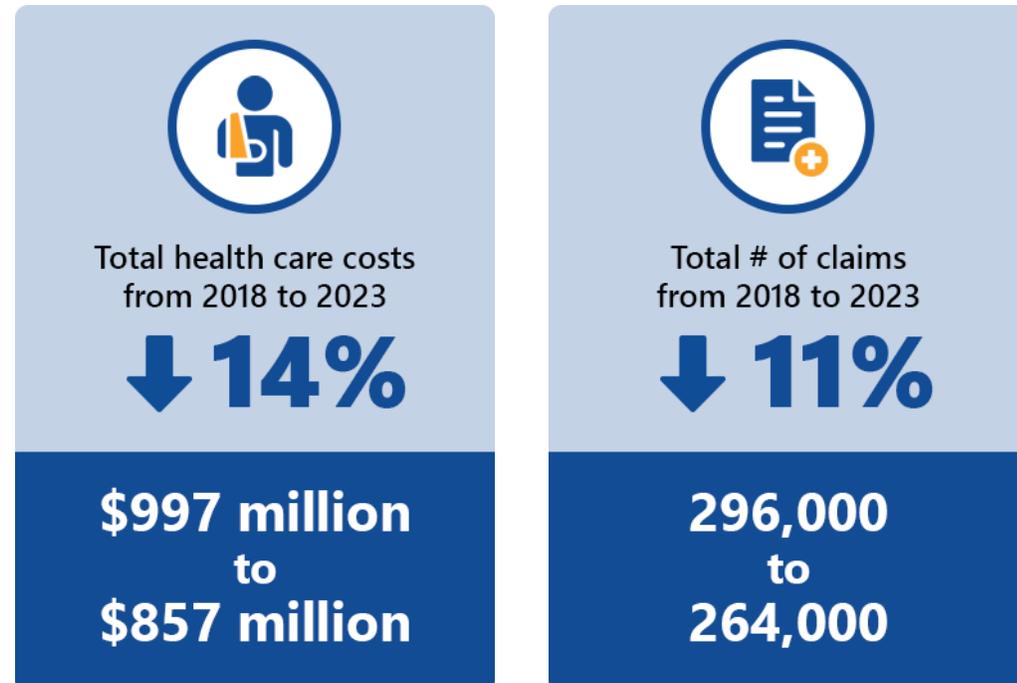
- DDScheduler@tdi.texas.gov.
- DDRecords@tdi.texas.gov.

2024 Health Care Cost and Utilization in the Texas Workers' Compensation System

Mary Landrum, Deputy Commissioner of Health and Safety

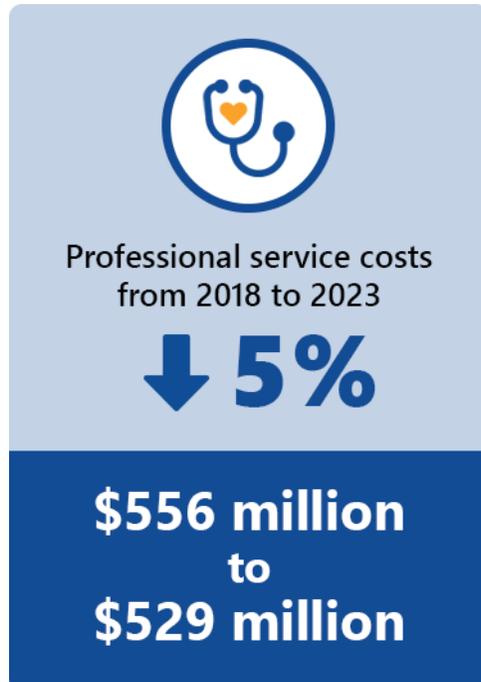


Key findings



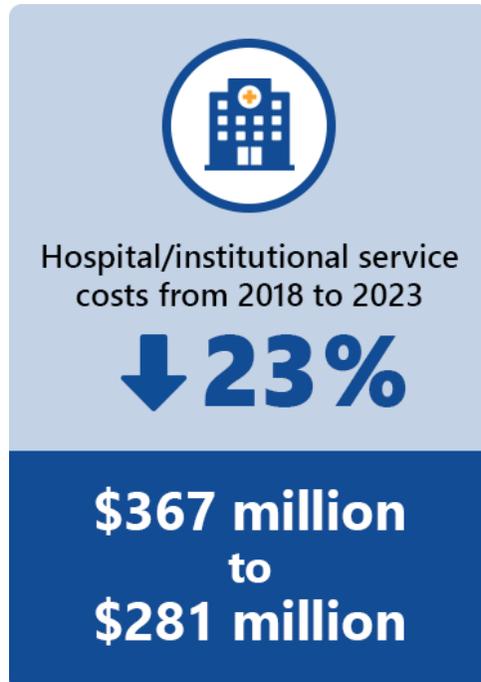
- Total health care costs declined 14%, from \$997 million for services in 2018 to \$857 million for services in 2023.
- The total number of claims decreased 11%, from 296,000 to 264,000.
- The average cost per claim also dropped 4%, from \$3,367 to \$3,245.

Key findings



- Total professional costs decreased 5%, from \$556 million in 2018 to \$529 million in 2023.
- The number of claims receiving professional services decreased 11%, from 281,000 to 251,000.
- The average cost for professional services increased 7% from \$1,976 per claim to \$2,105.

Key findings



- Total hospital/institutional costs decreased 23%, from \$367 million in 2018 to \$281 million in 2023.
- The number of claims receiving hospital/institutional services decreased 25%, from 84,000 to 63,000.
- The average cost for hospital/institutional services per claim increased about 2%, from \$4,392 to \$4,482.

Key findings



- Total cost of pharmacy services decreased 40%, from \$69 million in 2018 to \$41 million in 2023.
- The number of claims receiving pharmacy services dropped 35%, from 108,000 to 70,000.
- The average cost of pharmacy services per claim decreased 7%, from \$638 to \$595.

Read the report:



External and Media Relations update

Kate Sidora, Director of External and Media Relations



89th Texas Legislature, Regular Session

November 11, 2024

First day to file bills for the 89th Legislature.

March 14, 2025

60-day deadline for bill filing.

January 14, 2025

89th Legislature convenes at noon.

June 2, 2025

Sine die (last day of 89th Regular Session).



Key workers' compensation legislation

HB 2488

Videoconference
contested case
hearings

HB 331

First responder heart
attack and stroke
presumption changes

HB 1306

Change in benefits for
"death investigation
professionals"

HB 4464

Workers' comp
coverage for TDEM
disaster response

SB 815

AI use in utilization
review decisions

SB 1455

Terminology change for
workers' comp funding

Other legislation

HB 1700

Standardizing rules for telemedicine, telehealth, and teledentistry services

HB 2067

Declination, cancellation, and nonrenewal of insurance policies

HB 4144

Supplemental income benefits for first responders

SB 14

State agency rule reform

SB 264

Dissolution of the Texas Self-Insurance Group Guaranty Fund

Topics to watch



First responder issues



Medical benefits



Coverage and liability



Scope of practice

What's next?

- Implementation efforts.
- Interim charges.

DWC memos:



DWC rules:



The screenshot shows the Texas Department of Insurance website. The header includes the TDI logo and the text "Texas Department of Insurance". A search bar is present with the text "ENHANCED BY Google". Below the header, there are navigation tabs for "Insurance", "State Fire Marshal", and "Workers' Compensation" (which is highlighted in orange). Underneath, there are sub-tabs for "Home", "Injured Employees", "Empleados Lesionados", "Employers", "Health Care Providers", and "Carriers". The main content area features a large banner for "Become a Certifying Doctor" with an image of a doctor examining a patient's arm. To the right of the banner is a blue box with the text "Treating doctors, take your practice to the next level!" and "Why become certified?" followed by a list of benefits: "Conduct maximum medical improvement and impairment rating exams for injured employees you treat.", "Easy certification.", "Increased reimbursement rates.", and "Network and non-network referrals." Below this list is a link: "Learn about the role of a certifying doctor." Below the banner, there is a section titled "I want to ..." with a list of links: "Report my injury", "Get help with a claim (800-252-7031)", "Find a doctor", "File a complaint", "Learn about dispute resolution", "Learn about workers' compensation", "Find a form", "File a non-subscriber notice", "Make my workplace safer", "Report fraud", "Park at the Barbara Jordan Building", "Verify employer coverage", "Use TXCOMP", and "Use workers' compensation A-Z". The last item, "Use workers' compensation A-Z", is circled in red.

Communications update

Kara Mace, General Counsel, Legal and Communications Services



2025 DWC Workers' Compensation Conference

When: September 29-30, 2025

Where: Embassy Suites San Marcos

Registration: \$550 on or before August 15

Learn more:



CompCourses webinars

Free continuing education credit:

- **August 20:** Health care provider roles in the Texas workers' compensation system
- **November 5:** Employer responsibilities in the Texas workers' compensation system

Learn more:



Compliance and Investigations update

Dan LaBruyere, Deputy Commissioner of Compliance and Investigations



FY 2025-Q3 – complaints received by respondent type

Type of complaint	Injured employee	Insurance carrier	Health care provider	Employer	Attorney	Other
Attendance	1	2	4	0	0	0
Communications	2	246	153	77	8	1
Indemnity benefits	0	449	0	3	1	0
Medical benefits	0	174	73	0	0	1
Quality of care	N/A	0	56	N/A	N/A	0
Other	4	77	23	92	2	15

Based on complaint data as of 05/31/25.

Noteworthy differences – FY 24 and FY 25

- Medical benefit complaints against carriers down 42%.
- Medical benefit complaints against HCPs down 22%.
- Communications complaints against HCPs up 59%.
- Quality of care complaints against HCPs down 13%.
- Indemnity benefit complaints against carriers up 3%.
- Complaints overall down 0.4%.

FY 25 - Compliance Audits

Death Benefits/Lifetime Income Benefits

- 18 initiated and completed

Initial Payment of TIBs

- 20 initiated
 - 16 completed (3 of these audits were initiated in FY 24)

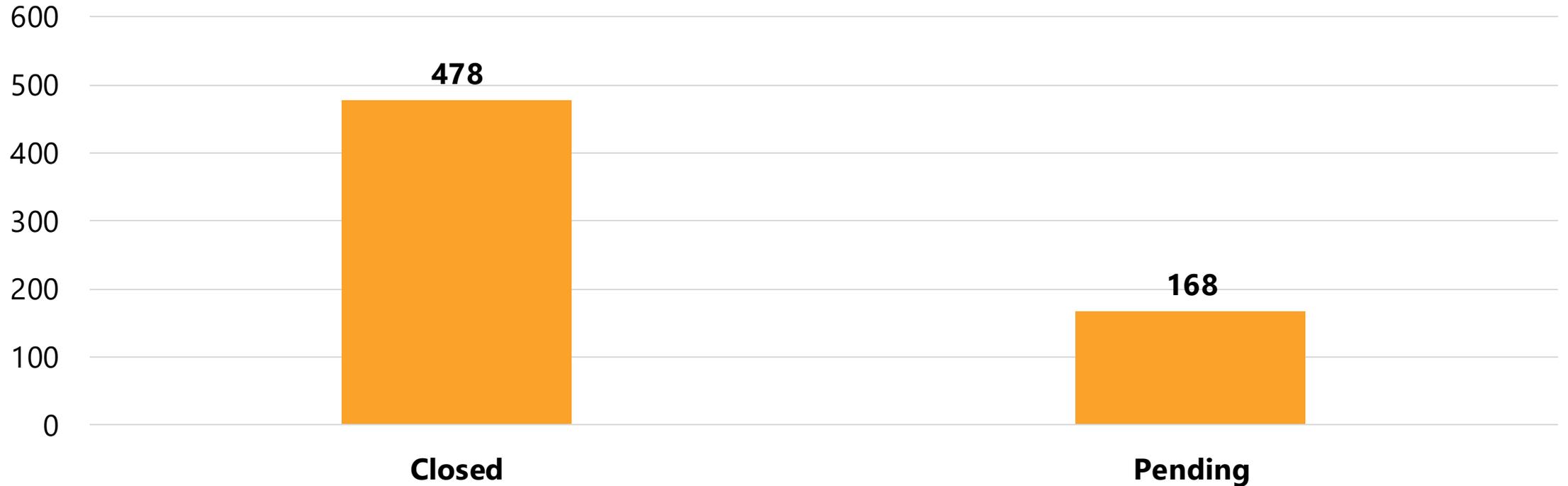
Medical Bill Processing

- 17 initiated
 - 14 completed (7 of these audits were initiated in FY 24)

• *Based on audit data as of 6/26/25*

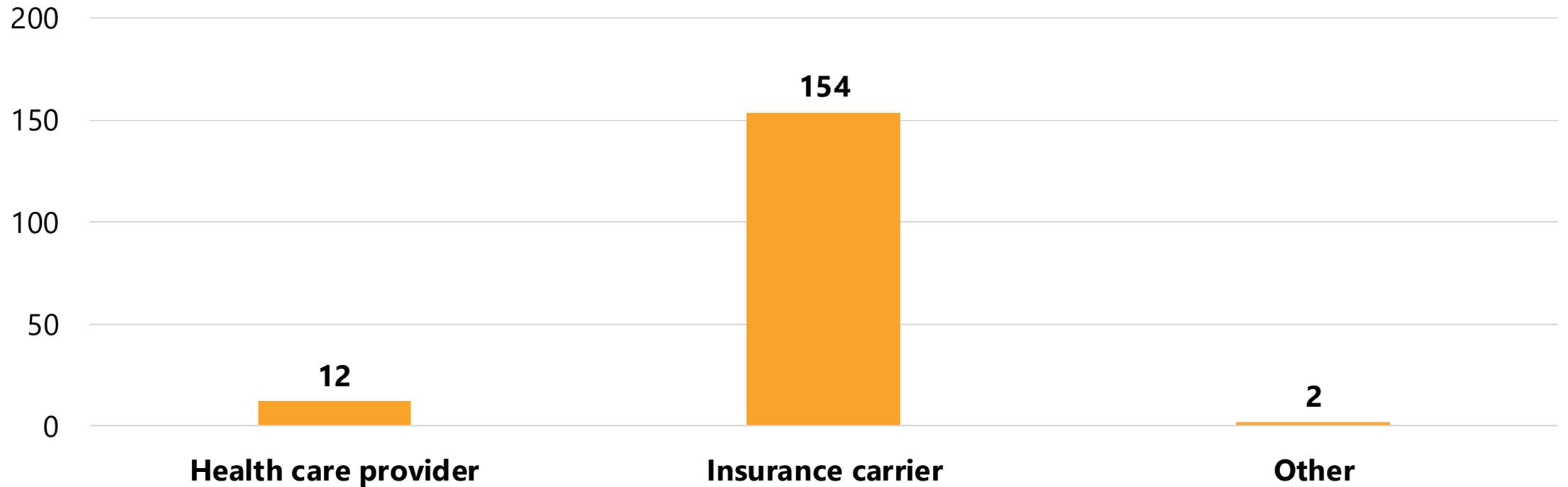
Enforcement Update

FY 2025-Q3 – enforcement case status



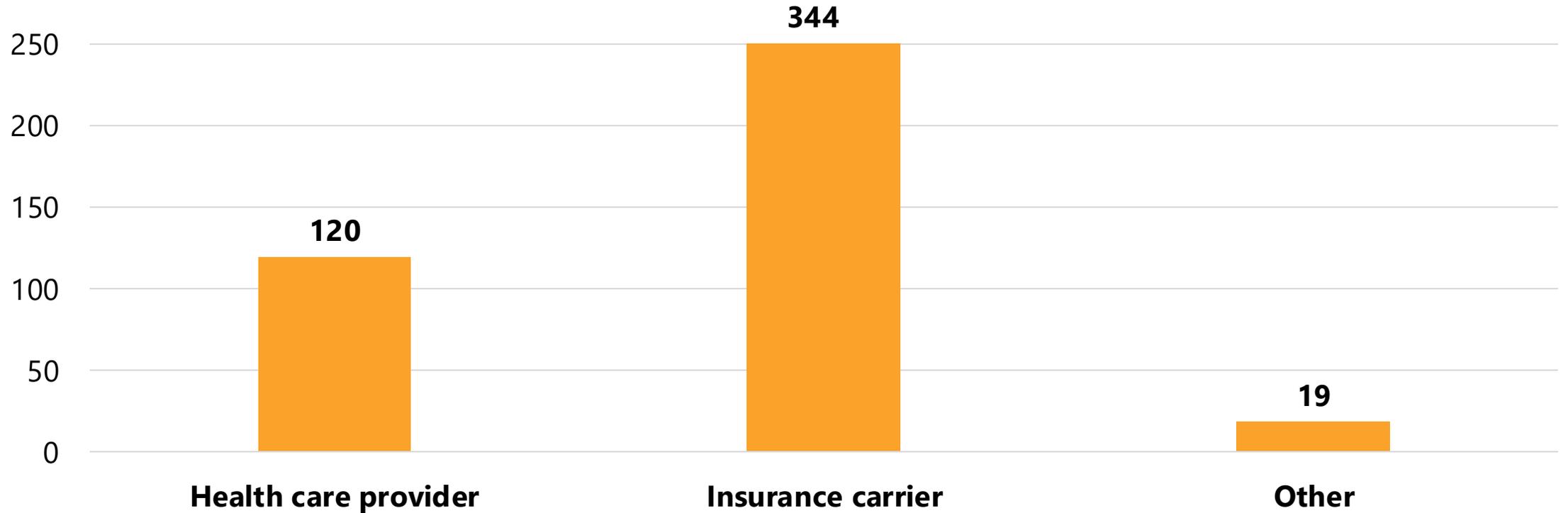
Based on enforcement data as of 06/26/25.

FY 2025-Q3 – cases pending by role



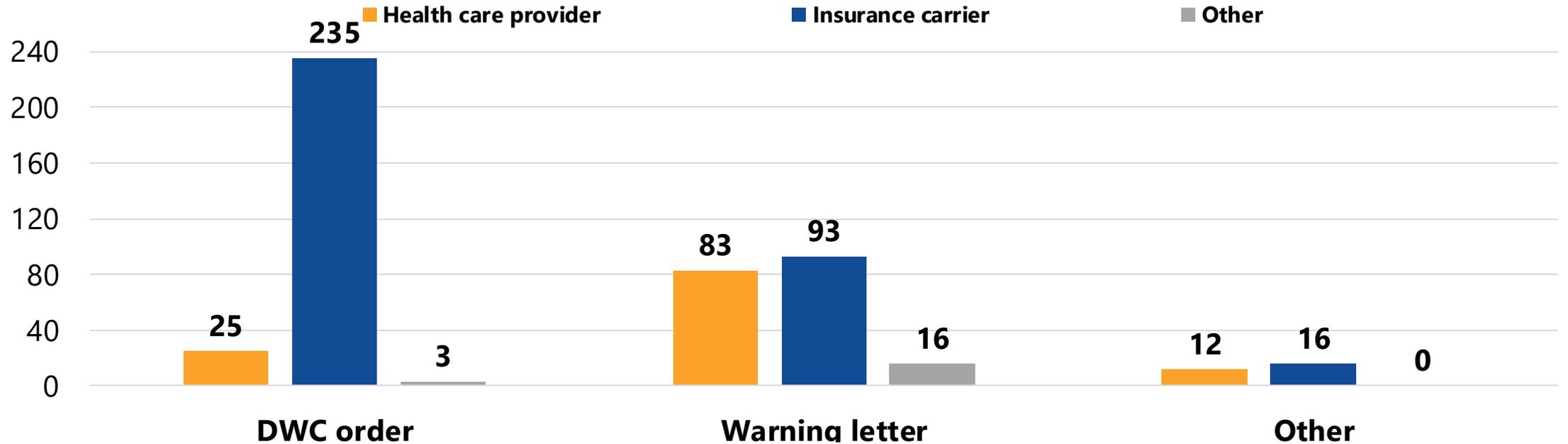
Based on enforcement data as of 06/26/25.

FY 2025-Q3 – cases closed by role



Based on enforcement data as of 06/26/25.

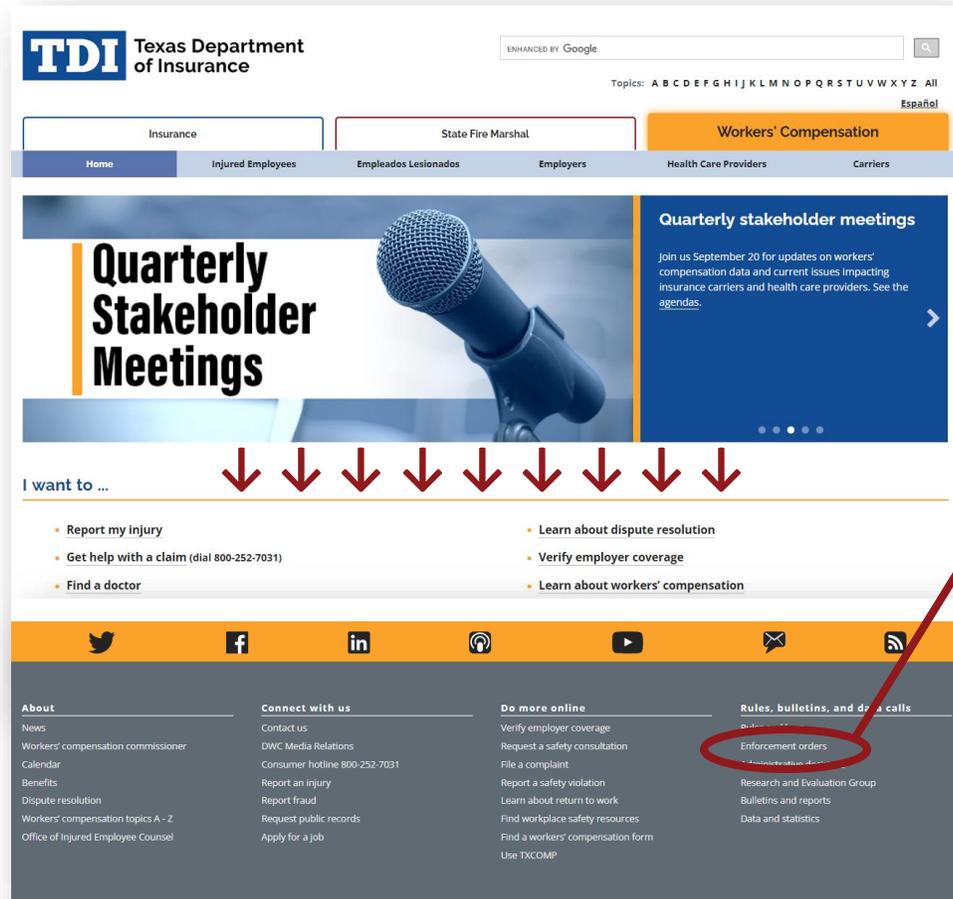
FY 2025-Q3 – cases closed by disposition type



FY 2025-Q3	Health care provider	Insurance carrier	Other
DWC Order	25	235	3
Warning Letter	83	93	16
Other	12	16	0

Based on enforcement data as of 06/26/25.

Enforcement orders webpage



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

or

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

Fraud Investigations & Fraud Prosecution Update

FY 2025-Q3 DWC Fraud Unit

1,170 fraud allegations received

41 fraud cases opened for investigation

29 fraud cases closed

Based on data as of 05/31/2025.

FY 2025-Q3 DWC Fraud & Prosecution Units

Referrals and indictments

Indictments

- 1 claimant
- 1 employer

Prosecutions and restitution

Successful prosecutions

- 2 claimants

Restitution ordered

\$37,500

Based on data as of 05/31/2025.

Hearings update

Allen Craddock, Chief Administrative Law Judge



House Bill 2488 implementation

About

- Contested case hearings (CCHs) by videoconference.
- Applies **only** to new CCH requests made at eligible BRCs.
- CCHs already scheduled before July 7, 2025, **are not eligible** for videoconference under HB 2488.

Effective date

July 7, 2025: Parties may begin requesting CCHs by videoconference at benefit review conferences (BRCs) held on or after this date.

How to request a videoconference CCH

At the BRC

- The benefit review officer (BRO) will ask if parties agree to a videoconference.
- If **both parties agree**, the BRO sets the CCH on a videoconference docket.

After the BRC

- **Mutual agreement:** Parties may file a motion to hold CCH by videoconference.
- **No agreement:** Either party may file a motion showing good cause to request videoconference over the other party's objection.

Hearing logistics and notifications

- **Set notice will include:**
 - Date and time of the CCH.
 - Zoom Meeting ID and connection instructions.
- Presiding officer may change the week prior to the CCH.
- Parties should monitor email for updates.
 - Subject line will read: "**Urgent/Updated Zoom Information.**"

Electronic documents and exhibits

Before a hearing, exhibits must be:

- Filed with DWC.
- Exchanged with all parties.
- At least three business days before hearing.

Best practices:

- Label and number pages of exhibits clearly.
- Do not upload duplicates unless updated – and note all changes.



How to submit documents and exhibits



TXCOMP

- Go to TXCOMP.
- Select "Online Access Request" from the main menu.



Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP)

- Contact DWC at eFiling-Help@tdi.texas.gov.



Email

- CCH_Exhibits@tdi.texas.gov (use underscore).
- Use encrypted email.



Fax

512-804-4011

Technology expectations and reminders

- **All parties must:**
 - Use video during the hearing.
 - Test equipment in advance to ensure audio and video work properly.
 - Dress appropriately!
- The administrative law judge will verify exhibits and page numbers at the start of the hearing.
- Help us ensure a smooth process by preparing thoroughly and communicating clearly.

Questions?

TDI Division of Workers'
Compensation

Closing remarks

Jeff Nelson, Commissioner of Workers' Compensation

