



**Iowa Workers' Compensation Advisory Committee, Inc.**  
**63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Workers' Compensation Symposium**  
**June 19 and 20, 2025**

**Agency Update**  
**From The Iowa Division of Workers' Compensation**

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**Division Statistics—New Petitions**

The number of Petitions filed with the Division over the past several years has dropped slowly but steadily:

2,964 new petitions -- excluding alternate care -- filed during FY 2024

3,058 new petitions -- excluding alternate care -- filed during FY 2023

3,295 new petitions -- excluding alternate care -- filed during FY 2022

3,265 new petitions -- excluding alternate care -- filed during FY 2021

3,399 new petitions -- excluding alternate care -- filed during FY 2020

3,534 new petitions -- excluding alternate care -- filed during FY 2019

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**First Reports, Hearings and Settlements**

**In FY2024:**  
 13,583 First Reports of Injury were filed with the agency  
 167 arbitration/review-reopening hearings were held before the agency  
 4,060 settlements were approved by the agency

**In FY2023:**  
 14,493 First Reports of Injury were filed with the agency  
 210 arbitration/review-reopening hearings were held before the agency  
 4,212 settlements were approved by the agency

**In FY2022:**  
 15,193 First Reports of Injury were filed with the agency  
 212 arbitration/review-reopening hearings were held before the agency  
 4,175 settlements were approved by the agency

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### Alternate Medical Care Petitions and Decisions

The number of Alternate Medical Care Petitions and decisions has declined somewhat over the past few years.

#### Alternate Care Petitions:

FY19---559  
FY20---451  
FY21---452  
FY22---492  
FY23---582  
FY24---548

Many Alternate Medical Care Petitions are filed due to lack of authorization for treatment recommended by an authorized physician and are dismissed when authorization is given.

#### Alternate Care Decisions:

FY19---131  
FY20---107  
FY21---108  
FY22---77  
FY23---78  
FY24---76

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### Appeals to the Commissioner

- The backlog of appeals to the Commissioner, which plagued the agency for decades, was finally eliminated in 2021, and we have continued to keep the number of pending appeals to the Commissioner as low as possible.
- A file on appeal is not fully submitted until the briefing is completed. A file cannot be placed in line for an appeal decision until it is fully submitted.
- Prior to 2019, the agency typically had between 200 and 300 total cases on appeal at any given time, and of that total, at any given time, the agency had between 100 and 150 cases fully submitted in line waiting for an appeal decision.
- As of April 30, 2025, there were a total of 28 cases on appeal to the Commissioner. Of that number, 5 cases were fully submitted on appeal and in line waiting for an appeal decision.
- At this time, appeal decisions are typically being issued within six weeks after the appeals become fully submitted, whereas before 2021, it took between 9 and 12 months after full submission for an appeal decision to be issued.
- A significant number of cases on appeal to the Commissioner are settled or are dismissed before they are fully submitted and never become fully submitted and an appeal decision is never issued.
- As of May 15, 2025, 1,501 appeal decisions have been issued since I took over as Commissioner in February 2015, which is an average of 13 appeal decisions issued each month.
- I spend approximately 50 percent of my time as commissioner working on appeals and approximately 50 percent of my time working on administrative matters.

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#### **Internet-Based Video Hearings**

Pursuant to an Order filed in August of 2022, as of October of 2022, and continuing indefinitely, all hearings in regular procedure contested case proceedings before the agency are held by internet-based video, unless the agency grants a motion for an in-person hearing. The Deputy Commissioner assigned to hear the case schedules the videoconference and sends the meeting invitation to the attorneys of record no later than 24 hours before the scheduled start time of the hearing.

The parties to a regular procedure hearing may move for an in-person hearing in the venue listed in the hearing assignment order. The motion for in-person hearing must be filed no less than 60 days prior to the hearing date and, if not so filed, the right to request an in-person hearing is waived. The motion for in-person hearing must specify whether the hearing shall be entirely in-person, or whether any parties and/or witnesses will participate via internet video.

If all the parties to a case file a joint motion for in-person hearing, the motion shall be granted. If the motion for in-person hearing is not a joint motion signed and filed by all the parties to a case, the party or parties requesting the in-person hearing shall make a showing of good cause for the hearing to be held in-person.

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### Deputy Commissioners and Support Staff

At the Division of Workers' Compensation, we currently have 11 Deputy Work Comp Commissioners who hear the cases, who write the arbitration decisions, who help with appeals, who rule on all the motions, and who perform other important time-consuming and difficult duties.

We also have an Assistant Commissioner, two compliance analysts, a hearing administrator, two docket clerks, a word processor, an appeals support clerk, a records request clerk, and our administrative secretary.

All of these people are very talented and hardworking. They do a great job of making the Division run as smoothly as possible with extremely limited resources which continue to become more and more limited as budget constraints continue to increase.

I want to pay tribute to every one of these people for their tremendous service to the workers' compensation community and to the people of the State of Iowa, and I thank them for their hard work and for their dedication. Whenever you have the opportunity, please thank them for everything they do.

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### Closing

For me, personally, it is a very distinct pleasure and a great honor to serve the people of the State of Iowa and the workers' compensation community as the Workers' Compensation Commissioner.

As you may know, my first six-year term as Commissioner ended more than four years ago on April 30, 2021. Shortly before my term expired, I was appointed by Governor Reynolds to serve a second six-year term. In May of 2021, my reappointment was confirmed by a vote of the Iowa Senate.

Please feel free to contact me with your questions and concerns. I am here to serve all of you, and I will listen when you contact me.

Thank you to everyone at the Division of Workers' Compensation, and to everyone else, for the generous support and the kind consideration I have received in the ten years since I took over as Commissioner. Thank you!

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