2009 Disputes table updates

Appellate review requests and orders, 1991-2008 The WCD Appellate Review Unit provides administrative Requests on Percent of Appellate review of decisions made by insurers regarding claim Requests disabling review Total orders closures and classifications of claims as disabling or classificarequest orders appealed to on hearings nondisabling. Effective 2004, insurers may also appeal claim Year closures tions rate issued closures when they disagree with findings on impairment by 26 16.8% 1991 6.065 5.953 49.0% attending physicians. 6,590 17.3% 53.4% 1992 73 6,508 17.2% 6,029 1993 6,011 87 48.1% Since 1995, the trend in the number of requests for 1994 5,915 99 16.9% 6.026 47.8% reconsideration of claim closures has been declining, 1995 6,764 152 16.6% 6,563 44.6% except for a small increase in 2007. The rate of requests for 41.2% 1996 5,773 128 15.8% 6,299 appellate review declined in 2005 and 2006, following an 1997 4,621 100 4,790 38.8% 14.6% upward trend since 2000. The appeal rate for appellate review 1998 4,527 123 14.5% 4,582 38.9% 38.7% orders reached a record low in 2008. 1999 4,313 126 14.8% 4.544 2000 4,078 132 14.5% 4,244 33.7% 2001 4,208 142 15.6% 4,253 35.1% 2002 4,072 188 16.8% 4,290 33.0% 17.1% 3,888 205 4,187 31.7% 2003 2004 3,955 186 17.3% 4,110 33.3% 2005 3,641 182 16.5% 3,935 26.8% 2006 3,514 198 15.4% 3,731 26.9% 2007 3,909 186 16.3% 4,057 23.4% 2008 3,636 147 16.0% 3,859 19.8%

Medical di	spute requests	s and orders	, 1990-2008	
Year	Requests	Orders	Request to order median days	Medical dispute resolution requests and orders had a peak in 1992. They declined sharply after a court decision limited the
1990	1,172	310	28	department's jurisdiction. SB 369 reversed this decision and
1991	1,386	969	112	the numbers have since increased, with 2008 having the most
1992	1,518	1,412	63	requests and orders overall.
1993	876	987	44	In 1000 CD 700 gave authority for determining the
1994	466	467	33	In 1999, SB 728 gave authority for determining the
1995	741	469	39	compensability of the underlying medical condition or the
1996	716	856	120	causal relationship between the accepted condition and the
1997	878	816	61	medical service to the Hearings Division. All other medical
1998	801	816	89	disputes are handled by the WCD Medical Resolution Team.
1999	905	819	84	In 2008, the number of medical dispute requests rose by 82
2000	991	948	114	1
2001	1,181	1,222	69	percent to 3,319; the number of orders rose by 52 percent to
2002	1,049	918	81	2,740.
2003	1,362	1,293	88	
2004	1,350	1,264	87	
2005	1,456	1,548	75	
2006	1,651	1,745	41	
2007	1,823	1,803	28	
2008	3,319	2,740	24	

Medica	Medical dispute issues, by year of request, 2001-2008								
Year	Fees	Medical services	Treatments	Palliative care	MCO issues	Changes of attending physician	Insurer medical exams	Compensability	Interim medical benefits
2001	22.8%	32.8%	8.6%	10.0%	8.2%	2.4%	1.1%	14.1%	-
2002	15.8%	34.3%	11.7%	8.2%	9.3%	1.8%	1.0%	17.6%	0.1%
2003	13.1%	37.1%	10.7%	5.4%	12.7%	0.7%	0.5%	19.5%	0.4%
2004	13.6%	35.0%	9.6%	6.4%	17.0%	1.0%	0.5%	16.7%	0.2%
2005	11.5%	46.7%	7.8%	3.6%	17.2%	1.3%	0.7%	10.9%	0.3%
2006	25.6%	42.7%	7.3%	4.0%	9.0%	1.3%	0.3%	9.7%	0.1%
2007	27.8%	40.2%	8.1%	3.1%	7.9%	0.5%	0.4%	11.8%	0.2%
2008	63.3%	21.1%	5.4%	1.5%	5.8%	0.1%	0.2%	2.5%	0.1%

SB 728 (1999) gave responsibility for disputes in which the compensability of the underlying medical condition is at issue to the Hearings Division. These cases were less than 3 percent of all 2008 medical-dispute-resolution requests. SB 485 (2001) amended the law regarding payment for interim medical benefits (medical services provided before a claim's initial acceptance or denial). It added a process for these disputes.

	<u> </u>		
Year	Requests	Resolutions	Request to resolution median days
1991	2,067	2,137	41
1992	1,643	1,725	29
1993	1,493	1,519	25
1994	1,389	1,373	24
1995	1,347	1,304	28
1996	996	1,037	35
1997	877	881	32
1998	716	715	26
1999	630	681	28
2000	549	563	35
2001	511	480	35
2002	512	530	63
2003	504	530	56
2004	551	551	42
2005	492	485	47
2006	456	495	30
2007	468	446	28
2008	469	500	36

The WCD Rehabilitation Review Unit provides administrative review of vocational disputes brought by workers. The number of requests has fallen by about 77 percent since 1991. The decline has resulted chiefly from the decrease in the number of vocational assistance cases.

The median number of days to resolve a dispute was 36 days for disputes resolved in 2008, and 85 percent were resolved within the standard of less than 60 days.

Vocational dispute resolutions, by outcome, 2001-2008

		Insurer prevail	Worker prevail	Other	
Year	Agreements	orders	orders	orders	Dismissals
2001	32.9%	17.4%	10.7%	2.5%	36.5%
2002	31.3%	21.7%	13.0%	2.3%	31.7%
2003	27.9%	28.5%	15.8%	0.8%	27.0%
2004	30.1%	26.0%	15.1%	2.0%	26.9%
2005	27.0%	22.9%	10.1%	1.2%	38.8%
2006	27.3%	27.9%	8.1%	0.8%	36.0%
2007	28.0%	21.5%	6.5%	0.9%	43.0%
2008	22.6%	30.4%	9.0%	2.8%	37.0%

The department strives to resolve vocational disputes through agreements, which generally have accounted for less than a third of resolutions.

Hearing requests, orders, time lags, and appeal rates, 1987-2008

		-		• •
			Request to order	
Year	Requests	Orders	median days	Appeal rate
1987	20,397	23,680	224	8.1%
1988	23,316	26,386	114	9.0%
1989	27,549	24,890	116	8.7%
1990	24,018	25,073	147	7.3%
1991	19,673	21,368	133	12.2%
1992	17,490	19,580	125	12.6%
1993	16,422	16,888	119	11.3%
1994	16,527	15,751	121	11.3%
1995	14,862	16,798	124	10.6%
1996	12,351	13,341	120	11.5%
1997	11,266	11,596	122	12.5%
1998	11,059	11,271	121	11.7%
1999	11,084	10,846	124	11.5%
2000	10,654	10,935	128	11.0%
2001	11,074	10,269	126	10.6%
2002	10,679	10,830	128	9.8%
2003	10,177	10,429	136	10.9%
2004	9,980	9,531	127	9.6%
2005	9,297	10,006	146	9.0%
2006	9,130	9,442	143	9.4%
2007	9,355	9,261	138	8.6%
2008	9,173	9,084	133	7.9%

Hearing requests peaked in 1989. There were 9,130 requests in 2006, the lowest on record, and a third of the 1989 figure.

Hearing requests have dropped for three primary reasons: fewer injuries and accepted disabling claims; law changes that have reduced litigation about permanent disability; and other reform measures implemented to reduce litigation, including the provision for claim disposition agreements.

HB 2900 (1987) required that a hearing be scheduled within 90 days and an order published within 30 days of the hearing. The median time between request and order was 133 days in 2008.

Notes: Counts include settlements that were received without a prior hearing request and cases generated in order to record a mediation result. Appeal rates are based on all hearing order types, not just appealable orders.

	Permanent	Claim	Partial	Insurer	Permanent disability was the most frequent hearing issue until
Year	disability	denial	denial	penalty	1989, when whole claim denial replaced it. For 2006-2008,
1987	46.1%	24.5%	9.3%	14.6%	permanent disability was an issue in less than 5 percent of
1988	39.7%	24.5%	10.4%	16.4%	hearings. Since the late 1980s, partial denial has risen from 9
1989	31.9%	32.3%	7.3%	16.6%	percent of hearings to over 43 percent, second only to whole
1990	33.3%	34.8%	8.8%	14.6%	claim denial.
1991	18.2%	43.7%	14.5%	10.0%	Reasons for the relative frequency change of permanent disability
1992	15.7%	40.9%	14.7%	7.5%	were HB 2900 in 1987 (disability standards), SB 1197 in 1990
1993	12.6%	48.7%	14.5%	10.3%	(department reconsiderations, medical arbiters, and CDAs), and
1994	11.6%	44.7%	19.9%	12.5%	SB 369 in 1995 (limitations on issues and evidence, and the
1995	10.4%	39.4%	27.5%	12.1%	
1996	11.5%	38.2%	34.4%	8.4%	definition of "gainful employment").
1997	10.1%	46.6%	24.6%	5.9%	Notes: This table does not include all issues. Also, orders may
1998	7.6%	42.9%	33.4%	7.2%	deal with multiple cases, and each case may have multiple
1999	7.8%	42.5%	33.9%	7.8%	issues. Issues are not recorded for cases that are dismissed or
2000	7.5%	40.7%	36.2%	7.4%	withdrawn.
2001	6.1%	39.7%	38.7%	8.1%	
2002	6.3%	39.7%	38.9%	6.6%	
2003	5.6%	40.7%	38.0%	7.2%	
2004	6.6%	39.7%	37.8%	7.5%	
2005	5.3%	41.5%	38.1%	7.3%	
2006	4.5%	39.8%	38.7%	7.7%	
2007	4.6%	37.6%	40.6%	8.6%	
2008	4.0%	36.3%	43.5%	7.8%	

Workers	Vorkers' Compensation Board mediations, 1996-2008								
Year	Mediations completed	Percent settled	Percent of settlements resolved by DCS	The board's mediation program began in June 1996. A mediation is considered settled by a disputed claim settlement if					
1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008	250 233 216 280 248 285 241 268 270 356 346 346	84.4% 91.6% 90.1% 89.8% 89.3% 85.5% 86.3% 86.3% 84.0% 87.0% 87.7% 89.4%	80.9% 82.0% 86.6% 83.5% 86.6% 92.5% 84.9% 88.4% 80.9% 81.6% 76.9% 75.9%	any included case is closed by a DCS. Data through 2005 are based on mediation worksheets; data for 2006-2008 are based on mediation events in the board's system.					

Issues in W	/CB mediat	ions, 1996-2008		
Year	Disease	Compensability	Non-WCB issues	"Disease" means compensability of an occupational disease; it includes mental disorder.
1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008	50% 50% 44% 63% 41% 49% 42% 41% 31% 67% 46% 64% 72%	N/A 90% 98% N/A 97% 99% 95% 99% 97% 94% 81% 79%	N/A 40% 47% 46% 43% 51% 55% 45% 45% 42% 43% 43%	"Non-WCB issues" includes employment rights, Workers' Compensation Division issues, torts, contracts, and other civil actions. In 2008, the cases resolved by mediation that included compensability as an issue dropped to an all-time low of 79 percent. Cases that included non-WCB issues have ranged from 40 percent to 55 percent since 1996.

Board	Board review requests, orders, time lags, and appeal rates, 1987-2008								
Year	Requests	Orders	Request-to- order median days	Appeal rates	The number of requests for board review peaked in 1991. Requests have dropped primarily because the number of hearing opinion and orders (judge's decision on the merits) has dropped				
1987	1,719	1,222	259	29.6%	from the high of more than 7,000 in 1988 to fewer than 2,000 in				
1988	2,151	991	306	12.8%	recent years.				
1989	1,944	1,576	548	13.6%	HR 2000 (1087) required a hoard review to be scheduled within				

17.2%

23.8%

27.9%

19.5%

20.1%

17.4%

17.9%

18.2%

18.5%

19.1%

21.2%

22.9%

14.5%

19.2%

17.9%

13.8%

14.9%

14.4%

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802

796

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912

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726

1,023

458

264

255

256

238

204

163

160

134

125

118

110

209

161

162

140

167

170

196

HB 2900 (1987) required a board review to be scheduled within 90 days and an order published within 30 days of the review.

The appeal rate of board-review orders dropped immediately from the 1987 peak. One reason was that HB 2900 changed the court's review standard from de novo to "substantial evidence."

Note: Counts exclude crime-victim and third-party cases, reconsideration orders, and on-remand orders. Appeal rates are based on all board-review order types, not just orders on review.

Decord communities :	- 4007 0000	
Board own-motion orders	s, 1987-2008	_
Year	BOM orders	In 1987 the legislature (HB 2900) limited worker benefits by own
1987	612	motion. The number of board own-motion orders peaked in 1991.
1988	724	The 2001 legislature (SB 485) provided for benefits when curative
1989	703	treatment is in lieu of hospitalization, new and omitted medical
1990	962	condition claims, and permanent disability. This may account for
1991	1,135	the increase in orders in 2003-2005 over 2002.
1992	1,003	
1993	927	Lawmakers in 2005 (HB 2294) required that a condition must be
1994	845	compensable before an own-motion claim may be processed,
1995	751	reducing own-motion claims.
1996	659	
1997	616	
1998	639	
1999	593	
2000	555	
2001	431	
2002	243	
2003	395	
2004	496	
2005	466	
2006	183	
2007	179	
2008	198	

Court of A	ourt of Appeals requests, decisions, and time lags, 1987-2008								
Year	Requests	Decisions	Request-to-decision median days	Appeals to the court peaked in 1992; in 2008, the number of appeals, 105, was just 15 percent of the peak.					
1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007	362 127 214 528 491 695 377 365 288 300 224 251 219 247 197 119 196 163 106 110	287 283 108 178 332 247 285 239 172 175 160 130 126 98 102 111 64 114 80 60 59	335 323 281 298 293 321 295 286 299 288 318 330 343 376 426 458 457 441 440 482 453	The primary reasons for the subsequent decline are the decreasing numbers of orders on review and the change in the court's review standard. Time lags for court decisions climbed for six straight years between 1996 and 2002. Time lags peaked in 2006 at 482 days (1.3 years). Notes: Decisions exclude court dismissals and remands where the court did not rule on the primary issue or direct a resolution. Time lags exclude dismissals. The decision date is the date of the court's slip opinion.					

Median time	lag (days) fron	n injury to or	der, 1987-200	08
Year	Hearings	Board	Court	Times from injury to order have declined substantially since 1987,
1987	758	1,067	1,496	in large part due to the change in the mix of issues. Whole-claim
1988	677	1,098	1,606	denial is generally the first possible issue in a claim and hearings
1989	602	1,320	1,512	the first level of appeal.
1990	617	1,169	1,770	Notes: Data are for all order types except Court of Appeals
1991	659	978	1,512	**
1992	655	1,047	1,549	dismissals. The 2008 court lag of 1,455 days equates to
1993	598	966	1,443	3.96 years.
1994	561	870	1,402	
1995	574	817	1,490	
1996	532	763	1,247	
1997	502	723	1,484	
1998	488	716	1,330	
1999	485	685	1,446	
2000	506	721	1,238	
2001	496	714	1,281	
2002	549	811	1,311	
2003	541	780	1,369	
2004	535	806	1,481	
2005	559	827	1,446	
2006	537	831	1,447	
2007	533	834	1,440	
2008	532	855	1,455	

Disputed claim settlements at hearing and board review, 1987-2008					
	Hearing		Board		The number of DCSs at hearing has dropped significantly
		Amount	,	Amount	since the peak in 1991, but their relative significance has risen. Between 1987 and 2008, DCSs grew from 16 percent to 37
Year	DCS cases	(\$ millions)	DCS orders	(\$ millions)	percent of all hearing orders and from 26 percent to 70 percent of
1987	3,778	\$18.2	N/A	N/A	all settlements.
1988	4,139	21.6	N/A	N/A	all settlements.
1989	4,365	22.5	N/A	N/A	Note: Since 2000, the board figures include on-remand DCSs.
1990	5,374	29.1	N/A	N/A	
1991	6,021	32.6	N/A	N/A	
1992	4,942	25.7	64	\$0.980	
1993	4,700	24.8	84	1.166	
1994	4,100	20.8	64	0.778	
1995	4,455	22.2	52	0.521	
1996	4,001	19.1	55	0.608	
1997	3,846	19.0	49	0.622	
1998	3,921	20.3	35	0.374	
1999	3,721	19.6	40	0.398	
2000	4,019	22.8	55	0.706	
2001	3,899	21.2	68	0.854	
2002	3,931	23.1	68	0.860	
2003	3,703	22.1	71	0.898	
2004	3,219	20.7	62	1.065	
2005	3,401	22.6	60	0.822	
2006	3,176	22.5	45	0.735	
2007	3,276	24.0	48	0.787	
2008	3,324	26.4	41	0.965	

Claim dispositio	aim disposition agreements, 1990-2008							
Year	CDAs approved	Total amount (\$ millions)	SB 1197 authorized claim disposition agreements in 1990. In 2004, 2,869 CDAs were approved, the fewest since 1991. This					
1990	362	\$6.9	decline probably results from the decline in the number of claims.					
1991	2,840	45.6	In 2008, more than \$62 million was paid in for CDAs.					
1992	3,229	47.0						
1993	3,304	42.5						
1994	3,260	41.8						
1995	3,929	48.6						
1996	3,564	45.0						
1997	3,268	44.3						
1998	3,074	37.7						
1999	3,073	39.7						
2000	3,144	39.9						
2001	3,143	39.3						
2002	3,207	44.9						
2003	3,040	41.2						
2004	2,869	43.8						
2005	2,923	43.7						
2006	2,954	52.2						
2007	3,025	52.1						
2008	3,153	62.2						

Claimant	Claimant attorney fees and defense legal costs, 1987-2008							
Year	Claimant attorney fees (\$ millions)	Defense legal costs (\$ millions)	Claimant attorney fees peaked in 1991 and 1992 at about 49 percent above 1987 fees.					
1987 1988 1989	\$14.4 16.3 16.6	N/A N/A \$23.4	Defense legal costs peaked in 1992 and were rising again from 2003-2008, reaching the highest level on record in 2008.					
1990 1991 1992 1993	17.8 21.4 21.4 19.8	26.1 27.0 28.2 27.2	Defense legal costs differ from claimant attorney fees in several ways: they include all costs, in addition to fees; they are the actual amounts paid rather than the amounts in rule; they are not reversible on appeal; there may be fees paid to multiple attorneys on a single dispute.					
1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000	18.9 19.9 17.5 16.0 16.1 15.8 16.7	25.7 27.4 25.3 24.3 24.2 24.2 23.9	Information about series breaks: Break #1. Beginning with 2004, data on fees at the Court of Appeals and in department medical service and vocational assistance disputes were available. For 2004-2006, these added fees were 1.5 percent to 1.9 percent of the total.					
2001 2002 2003 2	16.1 17.2 17.1 >Series break #1 17.7	25.7 25.3 27.1 27.7	Break #2. For 2007, data on fees for WCD contested cases at hearing ("Dept. Hrng.") and Board Own Motion were available. Added fees in 2007 were 0.4 percent of total fees. Both fees are estimated.					
2005 2006 2007	18.4 19.0 >Series break #2 19.2	29.4 29.7 30.2						
2008	21.0	32.4						

Clain	nant attorney	/ fees, 1987-2	2008		
Year	Hearings (\$ thousands)	Board (\$ thousands)	CDA (\$ thousands)	Reconsideration (\$ thousands)	prohibited hearing-awarded fees for issues before the director,
Year 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001	\$14,187 15,967 15,953 15,902 13,796 12,505 11,145 10,400 10,859 9,100 8,518 8,863 8,537 9,128 8,540	\$226 335 656 1,007 905 1,067 1,165 1,140 826 857 753 802 612 693 612	\$900 6,429 7,096 6,658 6,511 7,315 6,677 5,999 5,664 5,908 6,118 6,115	(\$ thousands) \$1 277 727 858 835 890 825 683 761 764 786 833	prohibited hearing-awarded fees for issues before the director, and limited fees for reversal of denials before hearing. In early 1999 the board increased the maximum amount of fees that may be awarded out of increased disability awards, disputed claim settlements, and claim disposition agreements. SB 620 changed penalty fees from one-half of the penalty to fees proportional to the benefit. The maximum fee is \$2,000. In 2008, 43 percent of all fees came from CDAs. For information about series breaks see comment in previous table.
2002	8,914 8,989 >	626 721 Series break #1	6,880 6,540	785 810	
2004 2005 2006	8,886 9,490 9,681	790 762 757 Series break #2	6,787 6,784 7,291	890 994 954	
2007 2008	9,648 10,139	746 912	7,621 8,832	841 764	

Clain	Claimant attorney fees from lump-sum settlements, 1989-2008					
Year	0		Lump sum	Lump sum	Lump-sum attorney fees are from claim disposition agreements	
1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005	•		\$4,147 6,273 12,672 12,238 11,588 10,759 11,797 10,593 9,749 9,675 9,762 10,624 10,409 11,457 11,054 10,897 11,278	•	Lump-sum attorney fees are from claim disposition agreements and disputed claim settlements. (CDA attorney fees are shown in the previous table.) Lump-sum fees increased from 25 percent of all attorney fees in 1989 (before CDAs) to 66 percent in 2002. In 1987, DCSs accounted for 23 percent of all hearing fees. This percentage peaked in 2002 at 50 percent; it was 48 percent in 2008. Note: The 1989-1991 board DCS figures are estimates.	
2006 2007	4,270 4,528	146 152	11,707 12,302	61.7% 63.9%		
2008	4,842	179	13,807	65.9%		

Maximum out-of-compensation attorney fees							
<u>Hearings</u>	1/1988 - 2/1999	2/1999 - present	For PTD, PPD, and time loss, attorney fees are 25 percent of				
PII) \$4,000 \$12,500 I		\$12,500	increased compensation award, subject to these limitations. Fees may exceed these limitations in extraordinary circumstances.				
PPD							
Time loss	1,050	1,500					
DCSs	25% of the first \$12,500, 10% of the remainder	25% of the first \$17,500, 10% of the remainder					
<u>Board</u>	<u>1/1988 - 2/1999</u>	2/1999 - present					
PTD	\$6,000	\$16,300					
PPD	3,800	6,000					
Time loss	3,800	5,000					
CDAs	25% of the first \$12,500, 10% of the remainder	25% of the first \$17,500, 10% of the remainder					