

Strategic Lean Project Report



Pilot: Streamlining Pre-Authorization of the Initial Mental Health Evaluation

Agency: Labor & Industries

Partners and Customers: Mental Health providers, injured workers, claim managers

Project Impact

L&I reduced waste in the pre-authorization of the initial mental health evaluation for potential post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) sufferers in one Designated Service Area (DSA), resulting in a decrease of 25 days to pre-authorize this critical evaluation, from well over 30 days to an average of five in the pilot. These are preliminary results.

Washingtonians in the pilot DSA who have suffered a traumatic on-the-job injury and may be in danger of developing PTSD are able to receive a mental health evaluation sooner.

Project Summary

Across the workers compensation claims program, we average about 5 days between the department's receipt of a request for department-level pre-authorization and the claim manager's (CM) or other appropriate staff's response when the provider uses an official pre-authorization request form. There's one notable exception to this: if the provider is requesting a mental health evaluation, we typically take well over 30 days. It is not uncommon for it to take several months to complete pre-authorization as we wait for workers and providers to respond.

The project goal is to eliminate waste in the process of granting pre-authorization for an initial mental health evaluation for possible PTSD sufferers. The pilot, running from 3/1/17- 11/30/17, allows us to test this new process. The pilot will also address unacceptable risks and unintended consequences, for example: whether or not the department will receive the prior medical records needed to adjudicate the claims.

The Pre-Authorization workgroup mapped the process of authorizing an initial mental health evaluation, identified areas of waste and delay, and designed a simplified process for potential PTSD claims that:

1. Involves the mental health evaluator in collecting the prior medical records, as they do for non-L&I patients;
2. Reminds the evaluator not to offer an opinion on causation without first reviewing the prior records; and;
3. Shifts the CM's required file review to a time when an actual decision is being made on the claim.

Project Results



Cost

We will evaluate this 12 months after pilot end to allow time for providers to bill..

→ In progress



Quality

We will evaluate this several months past the pilot end, to allow providers time to complete evaluations and submit reports.

→ In progress



Time

Decreased Time to pre-authorization of a mental health evaluation for possible PTSD sufferers **from** well over 30 days **to** an average of 5 days from receipt of the request for pilot-eligible injured workers.

→ *Saved over 25 days (preliminary results)*

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CMs and workers involved report initial satisfaction with the simplified process. Additional assessment of customer satisfaction will take place after the completion of the pilot.

→ In progress

Project Details

Date improvement project was initiated: 3/1/2017

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