

Workers' Compensation

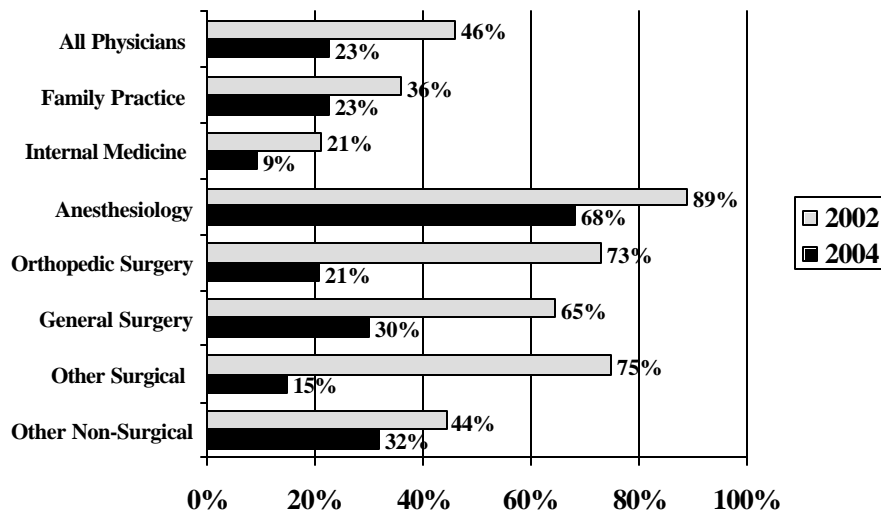
Special Report – 2004 Survey of Texas Physicians

Every two years, the Texas Medical Association conducts a broad survey of Texas physicians to identify emerging issues, measure changes over time in critical variables, and develop data to support TMA advocacy efforts. Although the 2004 survey includes questions on a broad range of economic and legislative issues, only the results related to workers' compensation issues are summarized here:

Historical Trend

- In the past two years, there have been alarming declines in the number of physicians who will treat all work-related injuries. Although access was poor in 2002, with only 46% of physicians willing to accept new patients with work-related injuries, that number has declined to only 23% in 2004. By comparison, 45% of physicians will accept all new Medicaid patients.
- Access to primary care physicians who can provide cost-effective care for minor injuries was already poor in 2002, and has suffered further declines with only 23% of family practitioners willing to take all new worker's compensation cases, down from 36% in 2002.
- Three quarters (77%) of orthopedic surgeons now limit workers compensation cases, dramatically up from (29%) two years ago. Similar declines in access have occurred for general surgeons and other surgical specialists.

Trend in Policy for Work-Related Injuries Physicians With No Limits on New Patients

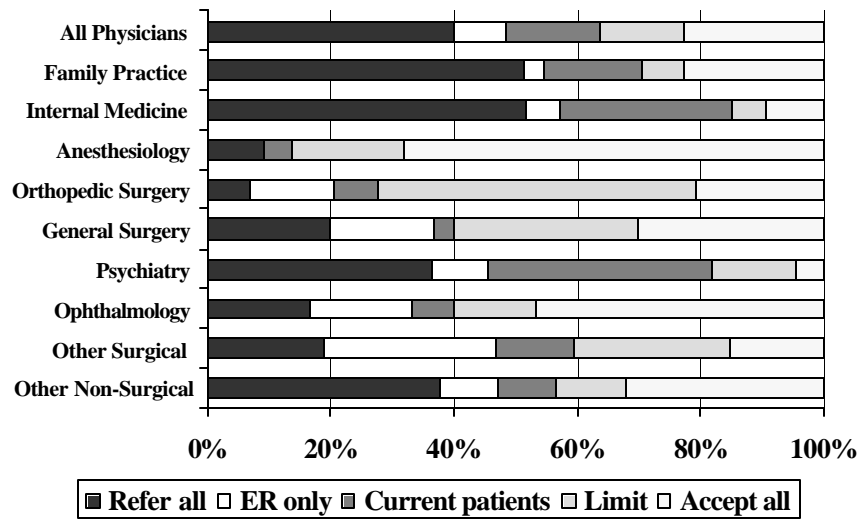


Source: TMA's 2004 Survey of Texas Physicians, 2002 Survey Final

Access

- A few family practitioners (16%) will treat their existing patients who have work-related injuries and others will treat patients that they see in hospital emergency rooms (3%) or accept them within some other limits (7%) but a majority (51%) will always advise injured workers to seek care elsewhere.
- Surgical specialists are more likely to accept patients on some limited basis. A majority (52%) of orthopedic surgeons report that they accept new patients within some unspecified limits. Additionally, 14% will accept new patients seen in hospital emergency rooms only and 7% continue to treat only their current patients.
- More than a third (38%) of non-surgical specialists are currently taking no new workers' comp patients, and another third are accepting them only within some limits.
- Only 5% of psychiatrists are accepting all new workers' compensation cases.
- Physicians in Brownsville and South Texas are most likely to accept workers' compensation cases, with 38% accepting them all.

Policy for Work-Related Injuries



Source: TMA's 2004 Survey of Texas Physicians

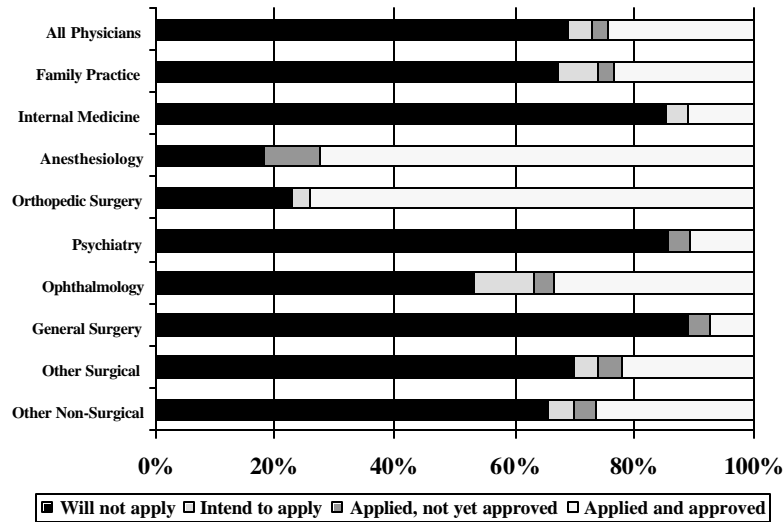
Approved Doctor List

- Some physicians may be willing to treat injured workers but may be prevented from doing so if they are not listed on the Texas Workers' Compensation Commission's Approved Doctor List. Admission to the list now requires an application process and the completion of some special training. Although a quarter of survey respondents reported that they had applied and been approved for the list, two-thirds (69%) have no intention of applying for ADL inclusion.
- Large majorities of orthopedic surgeons (74%) and anesthesiologists (73%) report that they have applied and been accepted to the ADL. In every other specialty, a majority of

respondents report that they have no intention of applying. Physicians who are not on the ADL will have to apply and be approved for special permits to treat injured workers or they will not be paid for their services.

- Larger percentages of physicians in Brownsville and South Texas (56%) and in El Paso and West Texas (36%) report that they have been approved for the list. Physicians in Fort Worth and North Central Texas (19%) are least likely to report that they are on the ADL.

TWCC Approved Doctor's List Status



Source: TMA's 2004 Survey of Texas Physicians