



Washington State Department of
Labor & Industries

Child Physical Abuse Exams

2024 Annual Report to the Legislature

November 2024

Available online at: [Lni.wa.gov/LegReports](https://lni.wa.gov/LegReports)

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Introduction

The Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVC) assists victims of violent crime by providing financial compensation for expenses such as medical bills, loss of financial support, and funeral expenses. Although CVC is housed within the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I), the program does not fall under Title 51 and has its own governing statute, RCW 7.68.

RCW 7.68.060 lists program eligibility criteria. These include: the incident must have occurred in Washington State; the incident must be reported to law enforcement within one year of the date of the incident; and a claim must be filed with CVC within three years of the incident being reported to law enforcement. Along with this, CVC is a secondary payer to any available insurance.

However, there are CVC-covered services in which reporting to law enforcement is not required and the program is a primary payer regardless of whether or not the victim has insurance. One of those services is paying for child physical abuse forensic examinations (CPA). To cover these expenses, medical providers must be registered with L&I's Medical Provider Network (MPN). If registered, providers are required to submit the billing to CVC with the examination report attached in order to receive payment. If either the provider is not registered with the MPN, the incident did not occur in Washington State, or the examination report is not attached to the bill, CVC would deny payment for the child physical abuse forensic examination.

BACKGROUND

In 2015, the Washington State Legislature passed Substitute Senate Bill (SSB) 5897 to provide authority for CVC to cover medical evaluations of suspected child victims of physical abuse. The bill authorized CVC to be a primary payer for these exams without regard to any other financial resources available to child victims. In addition to making CVC a primary payer, the legislature also did not require the incident to be reported to law enforcement in order for CVC to cover the expenses of the exam. However, the law expired on June 30, 2019, and was not extended. As a result, CVC lost the funding to continue paying for CPAs.

In 2022, the legislature passed SSB 5814 — updating RCW 7.68.175 — that reauthorizes and funds CVC's ability to cover CPAs. The legislature recognized the importance of these exams for children suffering physical abuse. Also, it recognized providing CVC the ability to cover these exams would incentivize timely evaluations, lead to early identification of abuse, and, potentially, prevent a child from further traumatization or injury.

In addition to covering CPAs, SSB 5814 requires L&I to submit an annual report to the legislature by November with the following information:

- Total number of claims (bills) requesting payment for child abuse exams;
- Number of claims (bills) approved or denied, including reason for denial; and
- Number of claims (bills) covered for another reason.

This report provides the required information.

Reporting Requirements

TOTAL NUMBER OF CLAIMS RECEIVED

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 (July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024), CVC received 927 claims (bills) for child physical abuse exams. This is more than twice the number received the prior year and a significant increase since the benefit first became available in 2016.

The total amount billed for the child physical abuse exams in FY 2024 was \$766,943. The program paid \$340,505 for 793 of the exams billed. Like other large insurance agencies, L&I determines the amount it will pay for each service in its fee schedule. CVC uses the medical fee schedule used in the industrial insurance system. Providers who accept payment from CVC may not bill the victim for the remainder of the cost. They are required to accept the payment as full reimbursement for their services.

In addition to the amount paid for each claim, 134 claims (bills) were not paid as child physical abuse examinations for reasons listed in Figure 2 below. Of those, an additional 10 were paid by CVC under a different provision.

Figure 1: Total Number of Claims Received and Amounts Paid

Fiscal Year	Number of Claims Received	Number of Claims Paid	Amount Billed	Amount Paid
2024	927	793	\$766,943	\$340,505

Figure 2: Claims Not Paid By CVC

Reason For No Payment	Number of Claims
Covered as a sexual assault exam in lieu of child physical abuse exam.	10
Not covered due to missing forms or reports to support bill was for CPA, or billing error.	63
Not covered due to, crime not in WA, claims coded as child physical abuse in error, or bills were for follow up care, not forensic exams.	61

Conclusion

In FY 2024, L&I received over 900 claims (bills) for child physical abuse examinations. This compares to over 400 claims (bills) for these same exams covered from the start of the program in June 2023 through September of that year. For further comparison, from FY 2016-2020, when the first iteration of this benefit was authorized, approximately 600 claims were received during this five-year period. Due to rules and additional stipulations in place during this period, L&I paid very few of them.

Since the removal of legislative barriers in 2022, more child victims have access to these vital exams. As L&I continues to work with stakeholders on refining billing processes and outreach, more providers are becoming aware of this service for child victims of physical abuse. Therefore, usage and billing for these services is expected to continually increase.