



## Designated Treating Physician Provisions – HB 334

With the implementation of HB 334 insurers were afforded the ability to designate a treating physician in an effort to better manage medical costs associated with workers' compensation claims. Montana State Fund believes this is a good start to getting injured workers the right care at the right time to facilitate appropriate and timely return to work. We acknowledge any treating physician designation should be both thoughtful and judicious.

We know there is a limited volume of specialists in Montana, and too frequently, an even more limited provider population willing to care for injured workers. To maximize injured worker medical care outcomes Montana State Fund identified a need to develop administrative relationships with Montana's medical communities. This led to the hiring a Provider Relations Specialist and four schedulers. The schedulers are responsible for scheduling medical appointments at the direction of the claims examiner or medical case manager, and obtaining medical documentation from treatment visits. As a result of these efforts, injured workers are receiving timely care with appropriate specialists, and claims examiners are getting the necessary documentation to manage workers' compensation claims.

As of March 31, 2014, Montana State Fund has managed a total of 18,759 claims for accident years 2011-2014. 85% of these claims never had a designated treating physician assigned as the injuries have either resolved or are resolving without this intervention. 2,742 claims were assigned a designated treating physician, and of this number only 223 (1%) were assigned a physician other than the injured workers' initial treating physicians. These 223 claims were reassigned as follows:

- 104 to a specialist;
- 101 to an ongoing care provider; and
- 18 to another similar specialist.

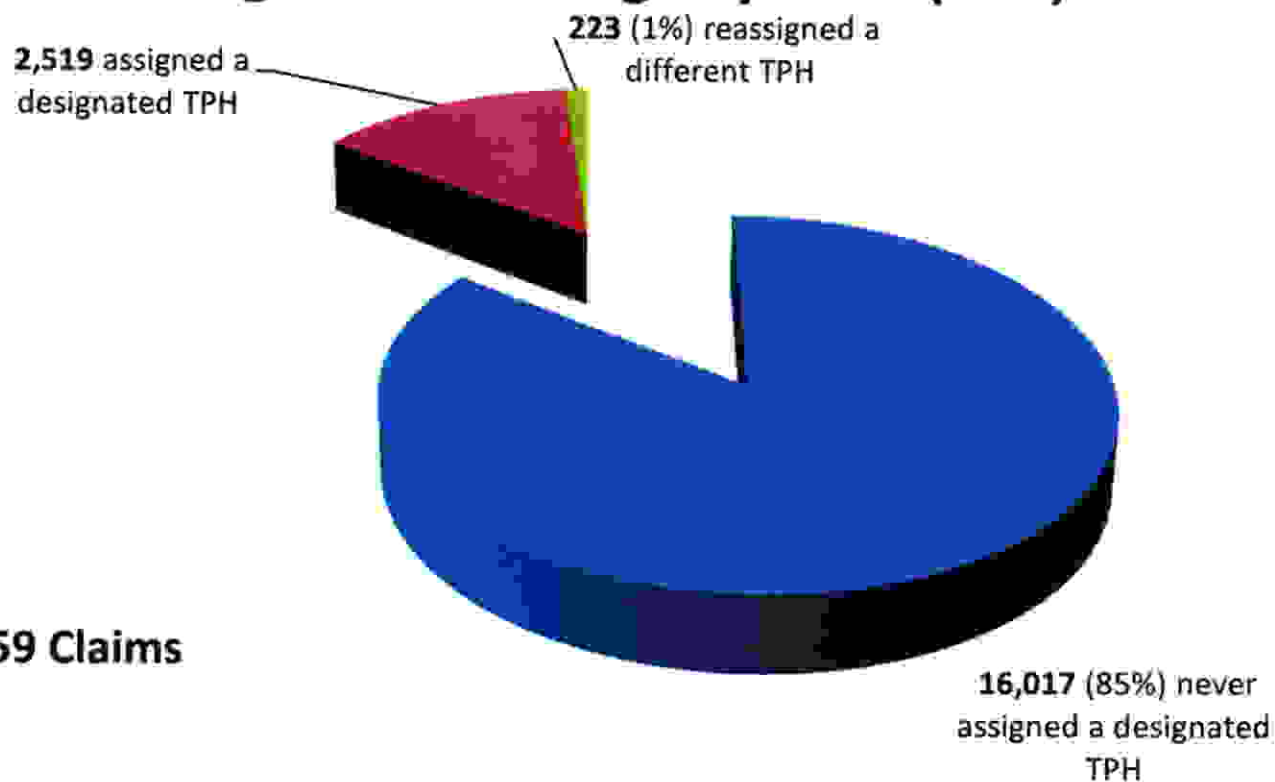
For the 18 claims that were reassigned to another similar specialist, 12 were at the request of the injured worker, 5 were at the request of the current treating physician, and 1 was due to the relocation of the original treating physician.

Prior to HB 334, Montana State Fund was able to designate a treating physician through our relationship with a Managed Care Organization. Our preliminary review of this designation data reflects similar results to those stated under HB 334.

Montana State Fund recognizes there are occasions an injured worker may object to an insurer's designation of a different treating physician. An injured worker may mediate a dispute over benefits which may include the assignment of a designated treating physician.

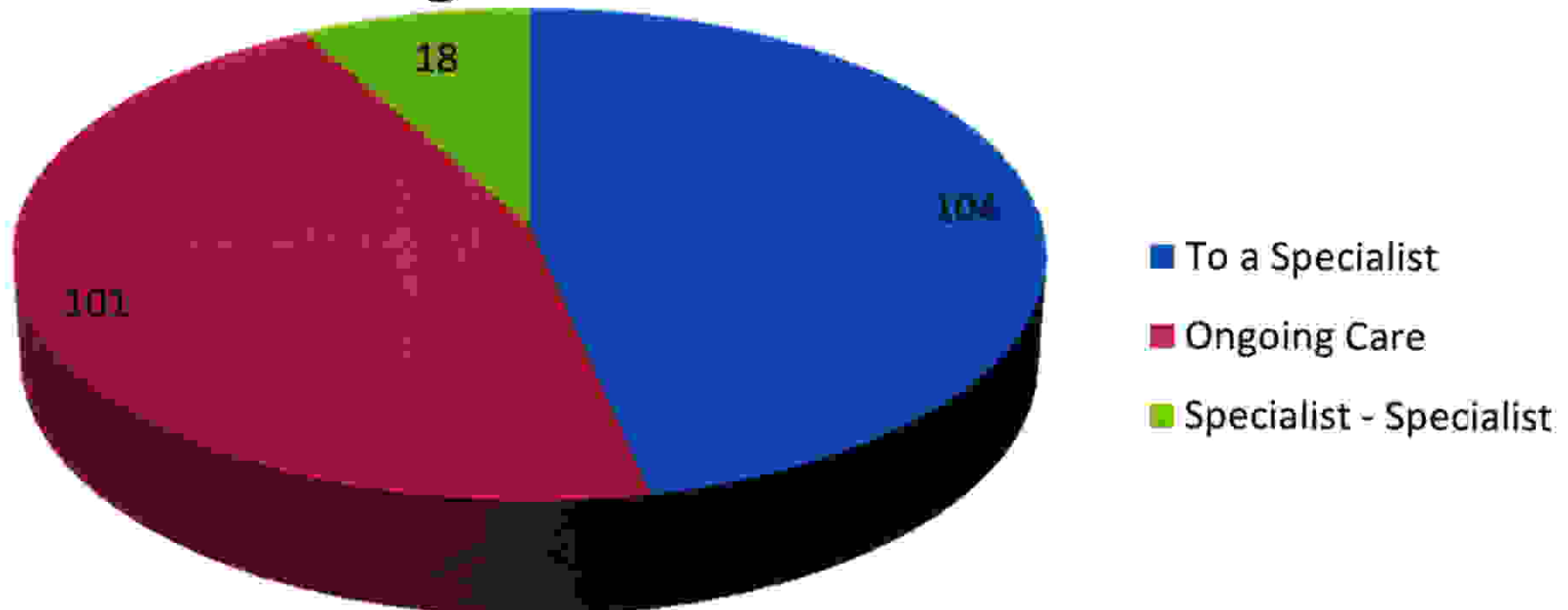
Montana State Fund believes designation of a treating physician is making a positive difference in getting injured workers timely and appropriate care and we support continuing the statute as passed in HB 334 in 2011.

## AY 2011-2014 Montana State Fund Designated Treating Physician (TPH)



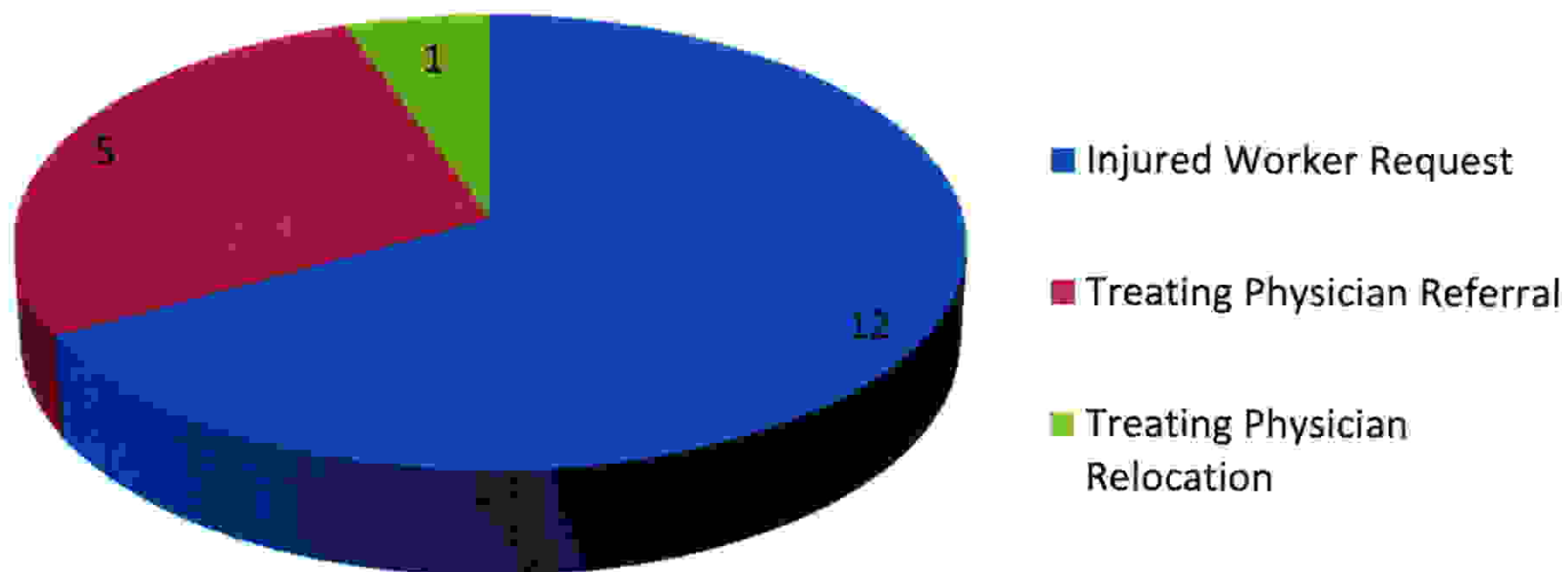
**Total 18,759 Claims**

## Initial TPH Different from Final Designated TPH AY 2012-2014



**Total 223 Claims**

## Specialist - Specialist AY 2012-2014



**Total 18 Claims**