

# Managing high-cost surgical claims

In workers' compensation, surgical claims are some of the most costly claims due to the propensity for complications and longer recovery times. Sedgwick offers key strategies to help control the cost of these claims while ensuring the best possible care for injured employees.

Workplace injury claims requiring surgical intervention cost nine times more than non-surgical claims. Taking a proactive approach to managing these claims is essential to improving outcomes and reducing overall costs. Our services below help clients minimize the impact of these high-cost claims.

## Surgery nurse program

Sedgwick was one of the first to introduce specialty surgery nurse services to help injured employees prepare for and recover from surgery. Our unique pre-habilitation/rehabilitation model encourages the employee to be an active participant in their recovery, which can reduce the likelihood of costly complications and facilitate a safe, healthy return to work.

When an operation is authorized, one of our experienced surgery nurses contacts the employee to assess health literacy, set expectations and identify any red flags that may impact their recovery. Using their computer or mobile device, the employee will receive brief lessons in nutrition, pain management, home readiness and exercises before surgery. Movements such as steps and range of motion are measured and the patient's progress is monitored and encouraged by the nurse. The exercises and well-being guidance continue after surgery. The nurse documents strengthening exercises and improvements, and keeps the examiner informed about the employee's progress.

We compared surgery claims with and without our surgery nurse program. When these services are engaged, average results include 27% faster return to work and 14% lower physical therapy costs.

## Repricing tool for surgical implants

We have developed a repricing tool to help control the rising costs of surgical implants in workers' compensation claims. The mark-up on implantable devices often exceeds 1000%, resulting in a \$50 piece of hardware costing up to \$50,000. State legislators were not effectively addressing the sky-rocketing costs, so Sedgwick created a solution. By aggressively reviewing the entire supply chain and provider billing practices, we are able to help our clients save on implants for orthopedics, spine conditions and pain management. Our repricing tool saved our clients more than \$30 million on implants in 2021.

## Orthopedic surgery network

Sedgwick offers a specialty surgical network for injured employees needing orthopedic or spine specialist consultations. This enhanced network supports our best practices in claims management and offers key services to help employees achieve maximum recovery. The network is comprised of orthopedic and spine specialists and free-standing ambulatory surgical centers. By driving injured employees to these top-tier providers, they receive the best possible care and are less likely to develop costly complications. This can reduce claim costs for employers and help employees recover faster.

To learn more about all of our managed care solutions, contact:

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