

THIRD COVID WAVE

Health insurance claims stay muted

Average claim size drops to ₹93,000, duration of stay down to six days

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With the third wave of the pandemic proving to be less severe than the first two, there has not been a significant rise in health insurance claims for the general insurance sector which had seen a deluge of claims after the second wave.

"There have not been too many cases of hospitalisation in the current cycle of Covid-19. Hospitalisation was only in cases where the patient had some other complication; most patients managed under home isolation this time," said Bhaskar Nerurkar, Head - Health Claims, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance.

At present, Covid-related claims for the insurer are at just 8 per cent of the claims it received in the second wave of the pandemic.

"As the infection is milder, the Covid-related claim size also came down by 17-18 per cent while the duration of hospital stay is also lesser. Even in



So far, insurance firms have received health insurance claims of over ₹36,000 crore

terms of home isolation, just 10 per cent of the overall Covid-19 claims are for home isolation this time, compared to 25 per cent at the peak of the second wave," Nerurkar said.

Fewer other claims as well

However, this time around too, claims for other hospitalisations have come down as people may be postponing elective and non-urgent procedures. These claims have come down by almost nine per cent, he added.

According to Satish Gidugu, CEO and Whole Time Director, MediAssist Healthcare Services, Covid-related claims had begun to stabilise in the October to December 2021 quarter and amounted to just three to four per cent of the total claims compared to a peak of

70 to 80 per cent in the second wave.

"In the third wave, we do see volumes with about 11 per cent to 12 per cent of our claims coming from Covid but there is much lesser severity, and there isn't a crisis situation as seen in the second wave," he said.

Both the duration of stay and average claim amount were lower in the third wave for the hospitalisation cases facilitated by MediAssist.

In January 2022, the average claim size for a Covid-related hospitalisation was ₹93,000 and the duration of stay was six days, according to MediAssist for its cases.

In contrast, in May 2021, the average claim size for Covid-related cases was ₹1.27 lakh and the duration of hospitalisation was 8.9 days. Average hospital stay rose to 10 days in June and peaked at 10.3 days in July 2021 for the company while the average claim size peaked at ₹1.63 lakh in September 2021.

In all, insurance companies have received health insurance claims of over ₹36,000 crore from the start of the Covid-19 pandemic to the beginning of February this year.