

Covid-related health cover claims up 50%

Total registered claims now at ₹14,287 crore

GNAGA SRIDHAR

Hyderabad, March 19

Covid-related health insurance claims have again risen steeply over last one month, according to general and health insurers.

The total registered claims now stand at about ₹14,287 crore as per data compiled by the General Insurance Council for the industry. Out of this, claims worth ₹7,561 crore have so far been settled by the general and standalone health insurers.

This is much higher than the earlier estimate which pegged the Covid claims for the present financial year at about ₹10,000-crore to ₹12,500 crore.

Though the increase in the number of claims differ from company to company, on an average, the industry is witnessing about 50 per cent surge in claims, say industry sources.

"There has been a substantial increase in the number of Covid-related health claims," Rakesh Jain, ED & CEO, Reliance General Insurance, told *BusinessLine*.

Rising cases

"The claims reported at RGI rose to 36.2 per cent (proportionate) in March compared to February and January and we also noticed a steep increase in the number of cases in February and March," Jain said. In comparison with the number of

claims in the January-February period, there has been an almost 50 per cent increase in Covid-related health insurance claims being reported, said Bhaskar Nerurkar, Head - Health Claims, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance.

The increase in claims is obviously driven by spurt in the number of fresh cases, say insurers.

"On an average the number of Covid cases per day increased from 15,620 to 29,377 in March 2021," said Jain.

The spatial distribution of claims also point to emerging clusters of Covid cases.

"If one looks at the origin of claims, they come from relatively new locations/cities such as Nagpur, Indore, Vadodara and Amara-

vati," Nerurkar said.

Claim settlement

Given the magnitude of claims, insurers have also put in place special measures for speedy settlement. For instance, RGI launched 'Self I' app immediately after the pandemic for ease of claim intimations for the customer.

Bajaj Allianz General Insurance has an in-house claim settlement team dedicated for Covid-19 claims. "We earmarked a few resources to settle Covid-19 claims on priority. This helped us settle Covid-19 claims faster," said Nerurkar.

According to chief of underwriting of a major general insurer, a few cases of fraudulent claims were also reported. "There has been a significant increase in the number of home-care treatment for Covid," he said.

