



BACK CLAIMS

# SPINE DIRECT-CLAIM DENIALS

An orthopedic blueprint for service connection, examination evidence, functional loss, and the current rating schedule.



19,268

CLASSIFIED DENIALS

46%

NO IN-SERVICE EVENT

32%

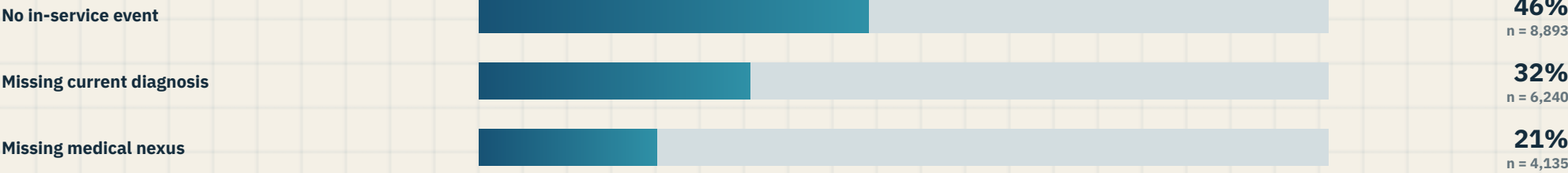
MISSING DIAGNOSIS

21%

MISSING NEXUS

SHARE OF CLASSIFIED SERVICE-CONNECTION DENIALS

## WHY DC 5237 DIRECT CLAIMS ARE DENIED



Among 19,268 classified service-connection denials. These Board patterns describe the published record and do not predict an individual claim.

THE DIRECT-SERVICE-CONNECTION TEST

## ALL THREE ELEMENTS MUST BE SUPPORTED

1

### CURRENT DIAGNOSIS

Identify the current diagnosed disability and the affected joint or spinal region.

2

### IN-SERVICE EVENT

Document injury, symptoms, onset, or another event during qualifying service.

3

### MEDICAL NEXUS

Use a reasoned opinion linking the current condition to the in-service element.

FILE

### COMPLETE HISTORY

Reconcile service records, lay evidence, post-service injuries, treatment, and symptom progression.

