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Economy**
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The (Poor**) Performance of the Unemployment Insurance System during COVID-19 in the United States and (**Especially**) Wisconsin**

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With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, unemployment increased at a rate never before seen in the United States. In response, the federal government expanded unemployment insurance benefits to aid those thrown out of work. However the rapid increase in unemployment claims put incredible strain on the unemployment insurance system, leading to non-payments and delays which limited the program's effectiveness. While unemployment insurance system performance deteriorated nationwide, Wisconsin was one of the worst performing states across many different metrics.

Although unemployment claims have grown sharply since COVID, a smaller share are now leading to benefits. Payment rates for unemployment claims have fallen from 45% to 20% nationwide, and to 12% recently in Wisconsin. Part of the decline is due to a large increase in applications from workers who do not qualify for benefits. Adjusting for changes in the pool of applicants suggests that recent national claims are much closer to pre-pandemic levels than the reported numbers suggest. Since March 2020, Wisconsin has had one of the lowest payment rates in the country, 5th of the 48 states with accurate data. But its pool of workers has changed less, suggesting that the low payment rates are due more to problems processing claims.

During the pandemic, unemployment benefits payments lagged claims significantly, with some filers going months without hearing on their cases. In Wisconsin nearly 30% of first unemployment payments were delayed more than 70 days, the 8th highest rate among states. Wisconsin's continued claims also had delayed payments at more than double the national rate. While payments have been slower, they have not been more accurate. Amid growing reports of rampant fraud, the fraud detection rate has dropped to near zero, with detected cases of fraud down 41% even as claims have exploded. Further, although the payment rate in Wisconsin has fallen, overpayments have increased. In the 2nd half of 2020, the state's overpayment rate was 27%, the 2nd highest rate in the country. For 2021:Q1, Wisconsin overpaid claims by more than \$12.8 million.

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Unemployment Claims

One of the most salient economic features of the COVID-19 pandemic was disruptions it caused in the labor market. Starting with the onset of the pandemic and public health restrictions, unemployment increased at a rate never seen before in the United States. Thus unemployment insurance (UI) became a lifeline for many workers, with states expanding eligibility and the federal government stepping in to provide enhanced unemployment benefits. However the vast and rapid increase in workers filing for unemployment put incredible strain on the unemployment insurance system.

In this report I analyze how the unemployment insurance system processed these claims, focusing both on the nation as a whole and the state of Wisconsin. I show that measures of the unemployment insurance system performance deteriorated: payment rates fell, payment delays increased, fraud detection essentially stopped, and overpayments soared. While there were problems with the unemployment insurance system across the country, Wisconsin was one of the worst performing states. While unemployment insurance and its expansions were aimed at providing timely relief to struggling workers, problems with the system administration severely limited its effectiveness.

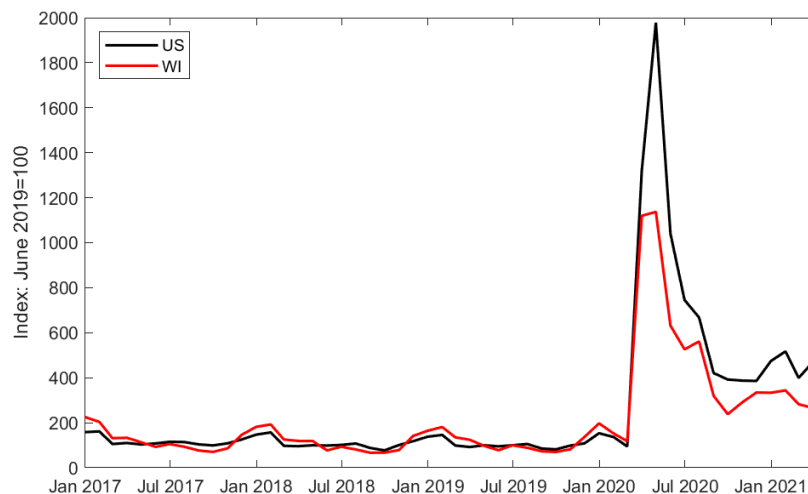


Figure 1: Monthly initial unemployment claims, indexed so June 2019=100. Totals for the United States (black line) and Wisconsin (red line).

As background, Figure 1 shows the monthly totals of initial unemployment claims, not seasonally adjusted, for the United States and Wisconsin. To make the series comparable, the levels are indexed so that June 2019=100. We see that prior to the pandemic initial unemployment claims in Wisconsin and the rest of the country largely tracked each other, with a slightly stronger seasonal cycle in Wisconsin. With the onset of the pandemic, initial claims soared to levels never seen before, but much more so nationwide than in Wisconsin. In April 2020, initial claims were nearly 20 times their

pre-pandemic levels nationwide and about 11 times in Wisconsin. Wisconsin has also seen a more rapid reduction in initial unemployment claims, which in March 2021 were 2.6 times pre-pandemic levels in the state compared to 4.7 times nationally. Thus while claims have fallen substantially over the past year, they still remain elevated.

While there has been a dramatic increase in initial unemployment claims, there have also been important changes in the makeup of these claims and how they have been processed by state unemployment insurance agencies. That is the focus of this report.

I rely on the data from the United States Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA). The ETA collects and compiles the reports from the state unemployment insurance agencies. In addition to their widely known weekly report on initial and continued unemployment claims, the ETA provides in-depth data on claims, processing, and payment information from the state agencies. This more detailed data is available at monthly or quarterly frequencies, with most series now complete through March 2021 (or 2021:Q1). To put the states and nation on a similar scale, and to measure performance and workload rates, I generally take ratios of the reported data series to the level of initial claims over the corresponding period. I focus throughout on the regular state unemployment insurance programs, not the federal extensions or expansions which occurred during 2020.

Payment Rates

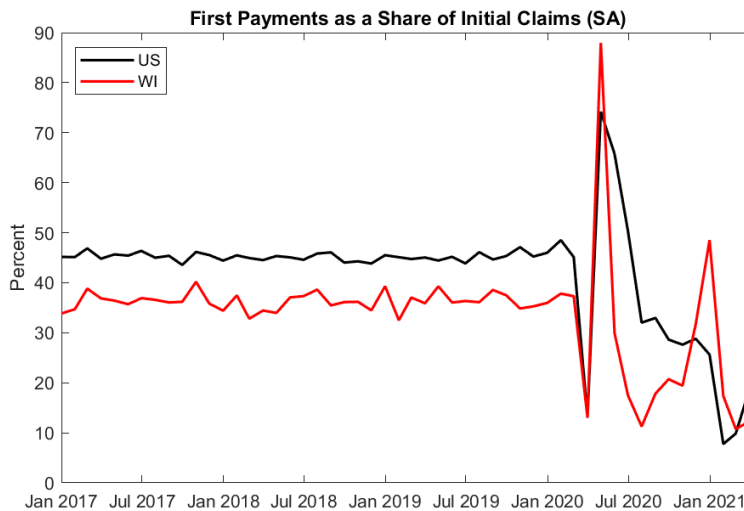


Figure 2: First payments all as a percentage of initial unemployment claims, seasonally adjusted. Totals for the United States (black line) and Wisconsin (red line).

I first turn to the payment rate of unemployment claims. In particular, although initial claims are widely reported as a proxy for layoffs, only a fraction of those who file unemployment claims will eventually get paid benefits. Figure 2 shows the payment rate for the United States and Wisconsin, which I computed as the ratio of the reported first

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payments to the initial claims over the corresponding period. While most of the data I report below is not seasonally adjusted, with some displaying strong seasonal patterns, Figure 2 reports seasonally adjusted rates (using an X13 filter).

The figure shows that before the pandemic payment rates were relatively stable, with the national rate averaging 45% and the rate in Wisconsin averaging about 35%. Then in early 2020 the rates had a sharp dip, due to the spike in claims during March 2020 which were not immediately paid, and a spike in April as the payments went out. After this brief reversal, the payment rate nationally declined over the course of 2020 before trending up slightly in recent months. After the initial pandemic upheaval, in Wisconsin payment rates were very low throughout most of 2020, apart from an end-of-year spike in December 2020. Over the last few months, payment rates have been around 20% nationally and around 12% in Wisconsin.

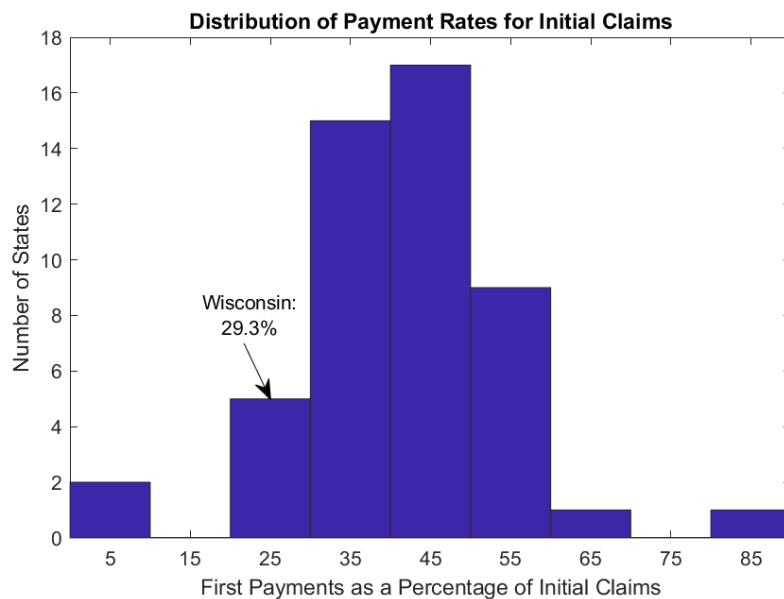


Figure 3: Distribution across states of first payments as a percentage of initial claims, cumulative share from March 2020 through March 2021.

Figure 3 shows the distribution of payment rates for all states from March 2020-March 2021, and Table 1 in the Appendix provides the full listing. Payments data for Minnesota and Montana appear to be inaccurate, with incredibly low reported payments (they are the two outliers shown in the figure). Leaving aside these two outliers, Wisconsin's payment rate of 29.3% was 5th highest of the 48 states (or 7th including the outliers). Thus fewer than 3 in 10 Wisconsin workers who applied for unemployment insurance over the past year have been paid, and in recent months that share has fallen to nearly 1 in 10. These are among the lowest rates in the country.

Although initial unemployment claims remain high, a far smaller share of them are now leading to benefit payments than before the pandemic. There are at least two reasons

this could be happening: either more ineligible workers are applying, or states are not processing the claims.

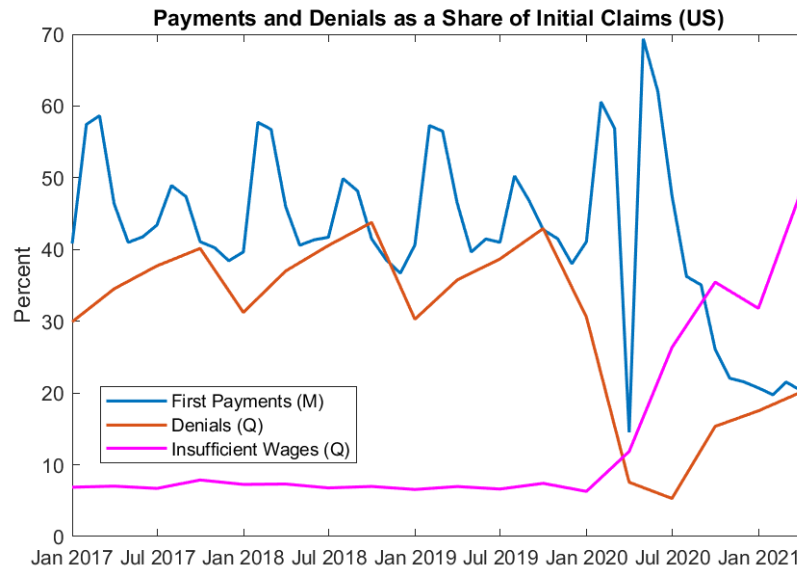


Figure 4: First payments (monthly data, blue line), denials (quarterly data, red line), and cases with insufficient wages (quarterly data, magenta line), all as a percentage of initial unemployment claims (in the respective month or quarter). Totals for the United States.

Figure 4 provides some evidence on the reasons why claims are not being paid nationally. The payment rate, as above but now not seasonally adjusted, is shown along with some of the components which account for non-payments. In particular, denials of claims, which are quarterly data, are shown in a red line. These are from cases which are reviewed by the state agencies and are determined to be ineligible. The ETA separately tracks claims of workers who would otherwise be eligible for benefits but had insufficient wages to qualify, which also result in nonpayment. The figure shows that in the years prior to the pandemic, around 35% of claims were denied, and an additional 7% of claims were not paid due to insufficient wages. Thus these two channels account for most of the non-payments from Figure 2. Others include other non-monetary determinations, which are holds on payments while questions are resolved, as well as outright processing delays.

With the expansions of UI eligibility, including the waiving of job search requirements, as well as the general overload of the UI system, the denial rate plummeted in the first two quarters of 2020 before rising over the last few quarters. In the first quarter of 2021, the denial rate was 20.1%, well up from the lows of 5-7% in mid-2020, but still far below pre-pandemic levels. Thus the decline in the payment rate was definitely not due to outright denials due to ineligibility.

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Even more striking than the changes in denials has been the expansion of the pool of applicants with insufficient wages. After remaining relatively stable at around 7% in the years before the pandemic, the share of initial claims from workers with insufficient wages has been steadily increasing. In the first quarter of 2021 (the most recent data) 48% of initial claims were from workers with insufficient wages to qualify. While rules vary across states, this means that workers had short work histories or earnings below the minimum thresholds to qualify for benefits. Presumably the introduction of the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program, which provides unemployment benefits -- including the federal expanded benefits -- to workers who are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance accounts for much of this growth. PUA was designed for self-employed workers, independent contractors, and those with limited work history, which clearly includes workers with insufficient wages. To qualify for PUA, workers must first be denied payments from the regular UI system.

Thus it appears that a large share of the decline in the payment rate nationally can be accounted for by a growth in the pool of ineligible applicants. However this also suggests that the continuing elevated levels of initial unemployment claims may mean less than they would otherwise suggest. For example, March 2021 reported 4.2 million total claims, which was a near post-pandemic low, but 5.1 times the level from March 2019. But over this time the payment rate fell from 45% to 20%, meaning that for each paid claim effectively 2.25 times as many people are applying now than before. Further, first payments in March 2021 were 2.24 times as high in March 2019. Thus paid claims were still elevated, but their increase was only half the increase of initial claims.

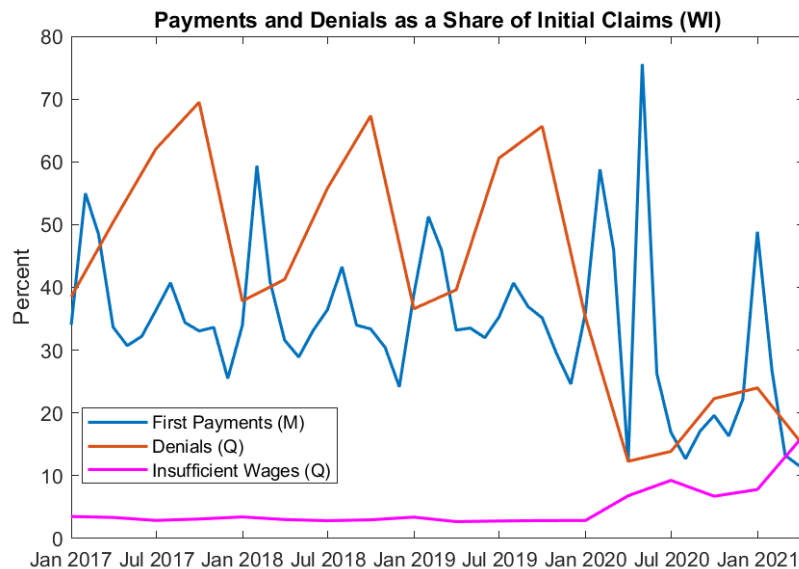


Figure 5: First payments (monthly data, blue line), denials (quarterly data, red line), and cases with insufficient wages (quarterly data, magenta line), all as a percentage of initial unemployment claims (in the respective month or quarter). Totals for Wisconsin.

Adjusting for payment rates, the decline in initial claims which has been reported in recent weeks would bring us much closer to pre-pandemic levels. In particular, assuming the recent payment rates continued, the latest weekly initial claims of 498,000 from May 1, 2021, would be comparable to a payment-adjusted pre-pandemic level of around 221,000. Thus the payment-adjusted initial claims would be up only around 5% from pre-pandemic levels in January 2020, as opposed to the 137% increase in the reported initial claims.

Figure 5 reports the same data series on payments and non-payments as in Figure 4 but for the state of Wisconsin. The data are more volatile due to the larger seasonal cycle in the state, and while they share similar broad trends to the national data, there are some important differences. In particular, we have already seen that the pre-pandemic payment rate was about 10 percentage points lower in Wisconsin than nationally. This seems to be mostly due to a higher pre-pandemic denial rate, averaging around 50%. Moreover, while there also has been growth in the share of claimants with insufficient wages, there are many fewer of such cases in Wisconsin. While nearly half of all national applicants had insufficient wages in 2021:Q1, in Wisconsin the share was only 15.6%. Thus much less of the decline in the payment rate in the state was due to increased applications from ineligible workers. This suggests that delays were a bigger problem in Wisconsin than nationally, which I now show.

Delays in Payments

During the pandemic, payments lagged claims significantly in many states around the nation, but Wisconsin was one of the worst performing states. Throughout 2020 and into 2021 there were numerous news stories in the state of people waiting six months or more before even hearing back about applications, with the state Department of Workforce Development (DWD) having a backlog of unprocessed cases in the tens of thousands.¹ The DWD Secretary resigned in September 2020 as a result of these problems. A state audit of initial claims which had been filed but not paid, “...found that it took an average of 13 weeks to resolve those initial claims, with the most common reasons for delays involving instances when DWD had not resolved issues despite having all the necessary information to do so.”² In addition to delays in processing individual cases, the federal expansions of unemployment benefits were delayed by months in the state. For example, an extension of expanded federal benefits was signed into law in December 2020 but Wisconsin did not begin issuing payments until early March 2021. Payments for the PUA program were delayed even longer.

¹ For just a couple examples, see <https://www.cbs58.com/news/cbs-58-investigates-thousands-waiting-for-unemployment-checks-due-to-computer-system-appeals-backlog> and <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/2020/12/23/thousands-wisconsinites-still-without-unemployment-pay/3992505001>

² https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/govt-and-politics/audit-dwd-largely-responsible-for-delays-when-processing-unemployment-claims/article_1f89e702-8c2f-50e8-9a1f-2efef2fab34a.html

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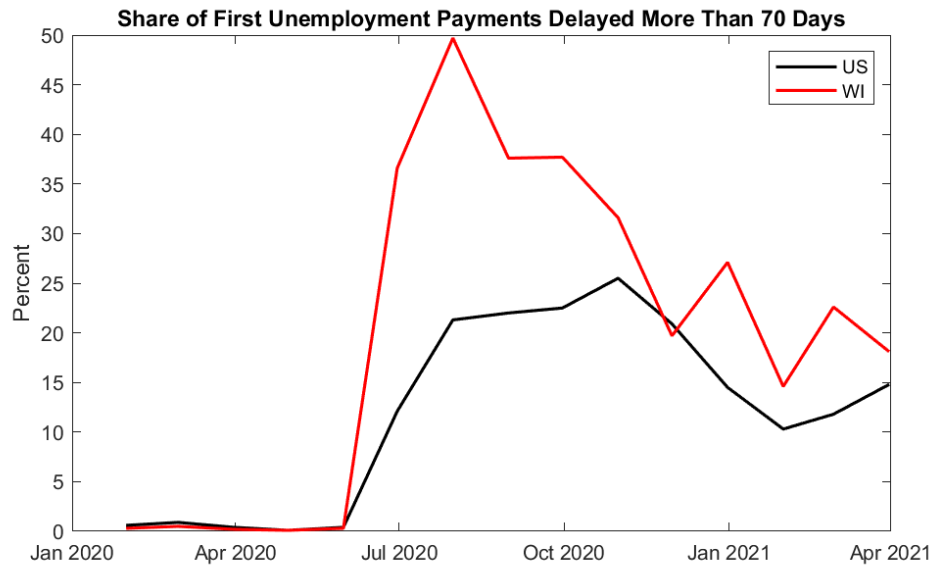


Figure 6: Percentage of first unemployment payments delayed more than 70 days, totals for the United States (black line) and Wisconsin (red line).

These anecdotal and news reports of severe delays are borne out in the data. Figure 6 shows the percentage of first unemployment payments which were delayed more than 70 days both nationally and in Wisconsin. Prior to the pandemic, a minimal share of payments had 70 day delays, but the spike in claims in March and April of 2020 led to a backlog which has only slowly been paid off. From July through November more than 20% of all first payments nationwide were delayed more than 70 days. The problem was even more severe in Wisconsin, where in the month of July 2020, nearly 50% of first payments to unemployed workers in Wisconsin had been delayed more than 70 days, the highest share in the nation. The state's performance improved somewhat later in the year, as the state brought in outside help from Google to resolve some of its backlog of cases. But delays are still more of a problem in Wisconsin than nationwide, as in recent months around 20% of payments have still been delayed more than 70 days.

Although 70 days or more is the longest delay category that the ETA reports, it is an understatement of delays applicants face. This is both because it is truncated, and because it does not account for the non-payments in the continuing backlog of cases which are under review or unresolved. Nonetheless, the figure shows that payment delays were a problem nationally, but especially in Wisconsin. Thus while unemployment insurance and its expansions were aimed at providing timely relief to struggling workers, the delays in payments severely limited their effectiveness.

Figure 7 shows the cumulative share of delayed payments across states during the pandemic. The full listing of delayed payment rates by state is provided in Table 2 in the Appendix. From June 2020 through March 2021, 17% of all first payments nationwide

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have been delayed more than 70 days. In Wisconsin, this share was nearly 30%, which was the 8th highest total among all states. Three states (Maryland, Nevada, and Oregon) had 70+ day delays in more than 40% of their first payments. In Minnesota and Montana, which as we've seen reported first payments data which seem inaccurate, the delay rate was less than 1%. But other states with accurate payment data, such as North Dakota and Rhode Island, had very low rates of delay.

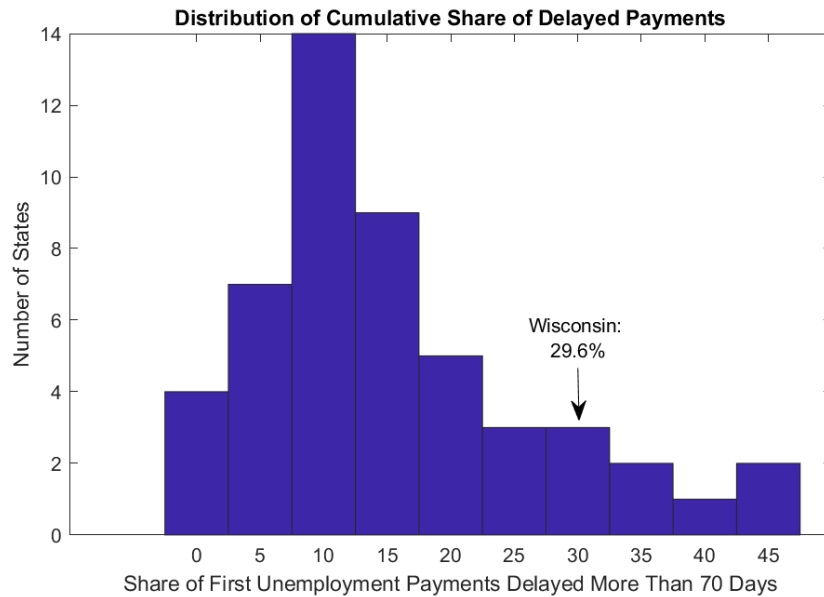


Figure 7: Distribution across states of the share of first payments delayed more than 70 days, cumulative share of initial claims from June 2020 through March 2021.

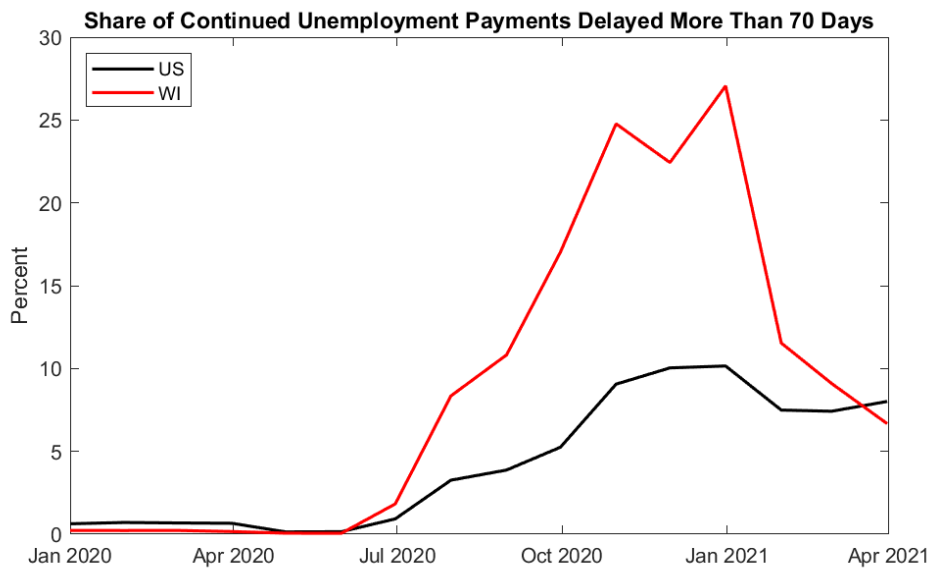


Figure 8: Percentage of continued unemployment payments delayed more than 70 days, totals for the United States (black line) and Wisconsin (red line).

Moreover, it is not just the initial claims and first payments which have been delayed. While workers wait on their first payments or for resolution of issues in their cases, they may continue to file unemployment claims. Figure 8 shows the share of continued unemployment payments which were delayed more than 70 days nationwide and in Wisconsin. Again, this share was very low prior to the pandemic, but by late 2020 had increased to around 10% nationwide and over 20% in Wisconsin, peaking at 27% in the state in December. Cumulatively since June 2020, 12.3% of continued claims payments in Wisconsin have been delayed more than 70 days, more than twice the national average of 4.9%.

Fraud and Overpayments

In addition to an increase in delays, the state unemployment insurance systems have suffered deteriorations in other measures of performance since the start of the pandemic. While fraud appears to have grown, the UI system has largely stopped detecting it. Furthermore, even though payments have been delayed, states like Wisconsin have been less accurate delivering the right payment amounts.

Over the past year, there have been increasing reports of fraudulent unemployment claims and identity theft. The Department of Labor Inspector General estimated that 10% of federal unemployment insurance payments since March of 2020 were improper largely due to fraud, and a number of states have recently reported surges in fraudulent claims.³ However the rate of fraudulent cases detected by state unemployment systems has dropped dramatically over the course of the pandemic.

Figure 9 shows the rate of fraud detection in the United States and Wisconsin, expressed as the ratio of the total number of fraud cases in a quarter to the total initial claims in that quarter. Prior to the pandemic, the fraud detection rate was about 2.7% nationally and about 1.7% in Wisconsin. Since the onset of the pandemic, these detection rates dropped to near zero and have remained at less than 0.5%. In particular, as the level of initial unemployment claims exploded in 2020, the absolute number of cases of fraud fell by about 41% both nationwide and in Wisconsin from 2019 to 2020. While other claims may have been held up on suspicion of fraud, states seem to have devoted less effort to detecting and pursuing cases of fraud.

Moreover, even though the unemployment system in Wisconsin has been plagued by substantial delays and a decline in payment rates, payments which are actually made have also become less accurate. Figure 10 below shows the rate of overpayments, expressed as the total number of cases of established non-fraud overpayments as a share

³ See <https://www.wsj.com/articles/unemployment-benefits-fraud-has-soared-in-the-pandemic-heres-what-to-do-11619688601>, <https://www.freep.com/story/money/business/2021/04/07/unemployment-agency-fraudulent-claims/7127075002/>, and <https://www.denverpost.com/2021/04/10/colorado-unemployment-insurance-fraud-pandemic/> for example.

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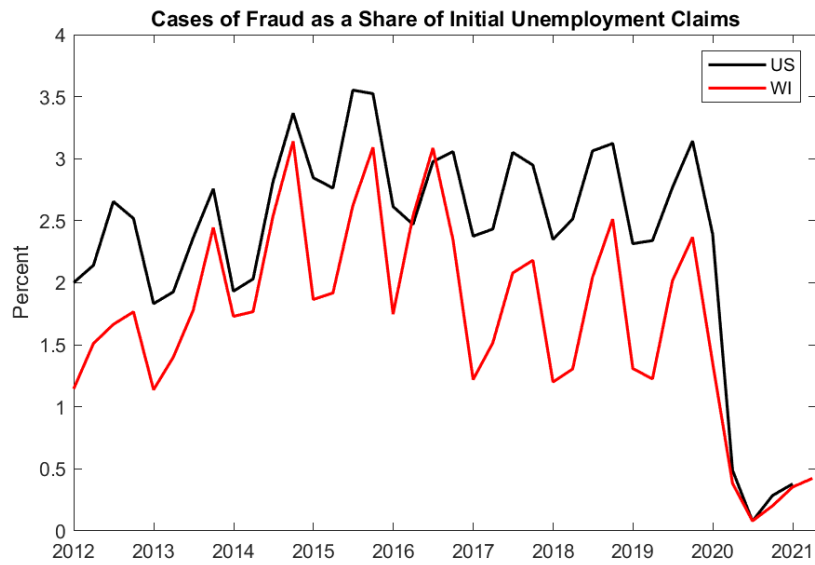


Figure 9: Established cases of fraud as a percentage of initial unemployment claims. Totals for the United States (black line) and Wisconsin (red line).

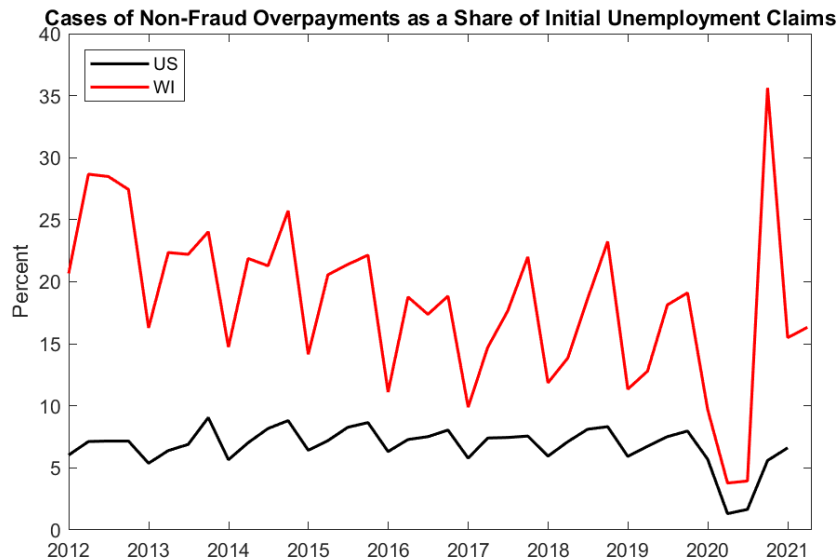


Figure 10: Established cases of non-fraud overpayments as a percentage of initial unemployment claims. Totals for the United States (black line) and Wisconsin (red line).

of initial unemployment claims. Again I take the ratio to initial claims to capture the rate of workload by the state agencies, but since the payment rate has fallen it actually understates the problems with payment accuracy. The figure shows that payment accuracy has not been a large problem nationwide, as about 7% of initial claims led to overpayments before the pandemic, and that rate dropped in 2020. However even prior

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to the pandemic, the overpayment rate in Wisconsin was much higher at around 16%. Overpayments increased during 2020, peaking at over 36% in the third quarter.

Wisconsin's overpayment rate during the second half of 2020 was one of the highest in the nation. Figure 11 below shows the distribution of overpayment rates across states over the third and fourth quarters of 2020 for the 49 states with complete reporting data. The full listing by state is provided in Table 3 in the Appendix. The national average over this period was 6.4%, while Wisconsin's rate was 26.6%, second only to South Dakota at 27.4%. Those two states are outliers, with all other states at 20% or less.

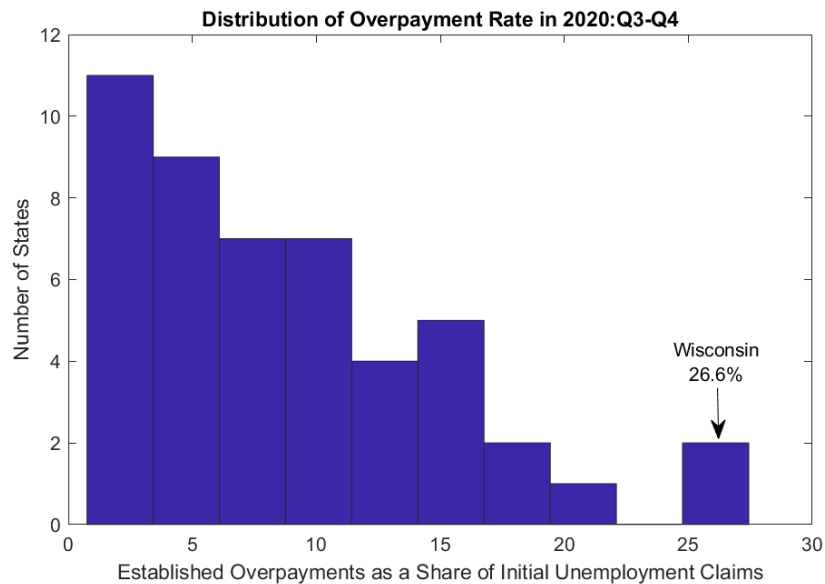


Figure 11: The distribution of overpayments across states. Established cases of non-fraud overpayments as a percentage of initial unemployment claims, cumulative for 2020:Q3 and 2020:Q4.

While I have focused so far on the share of cases with overpayments, in many of these the dollar amount of overpayments seems relatively small. Nonetheless with such a high rate of overpayment, the amounts involved cumulate. Figure 12 shows the dollar amounts (in millions) that Wisconsin's unemployment insurance system has paid out in established overpayments. For the first quarter of 2021, non-fraud overpayments had grown to \$11.8 million, accounting for 4.6% of all unemployment insurance payments during that quarter. Detected cases of fraud accounted for another million dollars, so combined overpayments in the quarter totaled over \$12.8 million.

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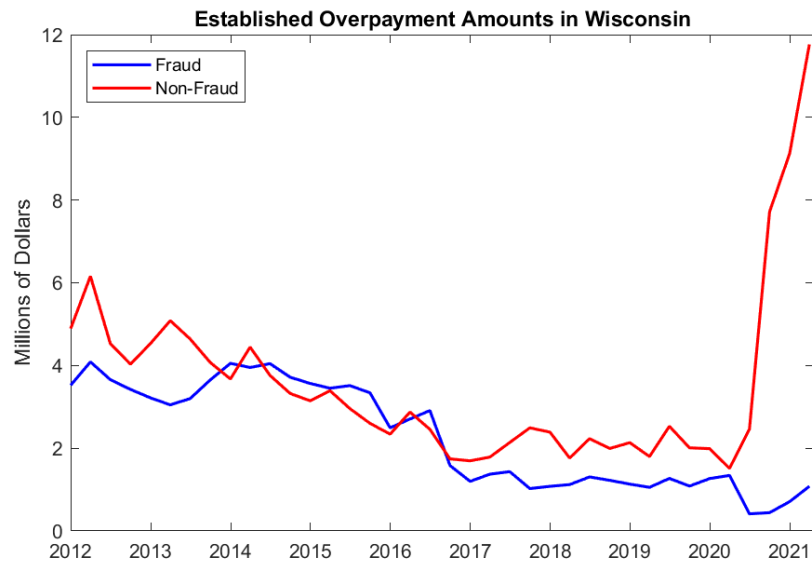


Figure 12: Amounts paid in established cases of overpayments in Wisconsin, in millions of dollars. Totals for cases of fraud (blue line) and non-fraud (red line).

Conclusion

The huge increase in unemployment insurance claims in such a short period of time during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic put an immense strain on state unemployment insurance agencies. In Wisconsin in particular, the pandemic found the state unable to handle the volume of claims, leading to a decline in payment rates, a vast increase in delayed payments, and a deterioration in performance even for those claims which were paid. While some of these performance measures have improved slightly in recent months, the state continues to lag most others in performance.

Governor Evers has proposed upgrading the Department of Workforce Development's computer and information systems, which could be funded out of the recent federal aid that has been received. However given the continued poor performance of the state system, more dramatic measures should be considered. The state made notable improvements once it contracted with Google to help work through the backlog of cases. The state should consider outsourcing its unemployment services management to a private provider on a permanent basis.

Appendix

Table 1: Initial claims (in thousands), first payments (in thousands), and payment rates (in percent) of initial claims by state. Cumulative data from March 2020-March 2021, sorted from low to high. Payments data from Minnesota and Montana appear inaccurate.

Rank	State	Initial Claims	First Payments	Payment rate
1	Minnesota	1311.3	48.8	3.72
2	Montana	190.6	15.1	7.93
3	Georgia	4860.1	1069.0	21.99
4	Kentucky	1512.2	371.8	24.59
5	Alaska	309.5	77.2	24.95
6	Washington	2132.8	598.0	28.04
7	Wisconsin	1365.3	399.6	29.27
8	Idaho	322.9	97.8	30.29
9	Maryland	1403.2	445.0	31.71
10	Ohio	3053.1	970.5	31.79
11	Missouri	1146.6	375.2	32.72
12	Indiana	1852.4	618.3	33.38
13	New York	7373.2	2469.8	33.50
14	Alabama	1084.7	375.8	34.64
15	Nebraska	256.5	89.2	34.79
16	Delaware	209.8	75.7	36.06
17	Louisiana	1337.6	482.8	36.09
18	Illinois	3728.5	1354.6	36.33
19	Oklahoma	1030.6	377.2	36.60
20	New Hampshire	371.0	139.0	37.48
21	New Jersey	2132.6	817.5	38.33
22	Arkansas	497.4	198.7	39.96
23	Wyoming	84.6	33.8	40.03
24	Kansas	1137.0	459.9	40.45
25	California	12604.6	5107.9	40.52
26	Hawaii	475.6	198.1	41.66
27	Mississippi	616.7	259.4	42.06
28	Arizona	1123.7	477.2	42.47
29	North Carolina	1749.0	758.0	43.34
30	Florida	4102.1	1777.8	43.34
31	South Carolina	866.3	380.1	43.87
32	Texas	4867.1	2139.0	43.95
33	Colorado	1339.3	604.0	45.10
34	Rhode Island	368.5	169.9	46.11
35	Tennessee	1089.4	513.0	47.09
36	Connecticut	743.9	355.1	47.73
37	Pennsylvania	2874.6	1402.0	48.77

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38	New Mexico	337.4	164.8	48.84
39	Utah	313.2	155.4	49.60
40	Massachusetts	1941.5	976.8	50.31
41	Vermont	159.4	83.2	52.19
42	Iowa	614.1	322.7	52.56
43	Nevada	916.3	495.0	54.03
44	Michigan	2364.2	1294.8	54.77
45	West Virginia	290.6	160.1	55.10
46	South Dakota	70.6	39.6	56.03
47	Oregon	818.2	460.1	56.23
48	Maine	239.1	139.4	58.29
49	North Dakota	125.6	77.4	61.62
50	Virginia	1583.5	1290.6	81.50

Table 2: First payments (in thousands), first payments delayed more than 70 days (in thousands), and share of first payments delayed by more than 70 days (in percent). Cumulative data from July 2020-March 2021, sorted from high to low.

Rank	State	1st Payments	Delayed 1st Payments	Delay Rate
1	Maryland	137.8	59.3	43.03
2	Oregon	238.9	102.7	42.99
3	Nevada	218.6	92.9	42.50
4	Hawaii	74.5	25.5	34.25
5	Kentucky	78.8	26.9	34.14
6	New York	1097.2	346.8	31.61
7	Washington	200.2	61.1	30.53
8	Wisconsin	148.9	44.0	29.56
9	Michigan	360.7	93.6	25.96
10	Delaware	24.0	5.9	24.70
11	Maine	44.4	10.1	22.68
12	Pennsylvania	429.9	88.6	20.61
13	South Dakota	14.4	2.9	20.46
14	Ohio	288.4	55.8	19.35
15	Indiana	212.6	39.9	18.78
16	Florida	1064.1	187.9	17.66
17	Tennessee	171.6	28.0	16.29
18	New Jersey	288.1	45.8	15.90
19	Virginia	190.9	26.7	13.96
20	Massachusetts	758.2	104.5	13.79
21	Oklahoma	137.5	18.7	13.59
22	West Virginia	46.1	6.2	13.44
23	Idaho	39.1	5.0	12.91
24	Mississippi	95.5	12.2	12.74
25	New Hampshire	36.7	4.6	12.64

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26	Iowa	110.6	13.5	12.21
27	New Mexico	64.9	7.3	11.24
28	Arkansas	72.2	8.0	11.11
29	Georgia	351.7	38.6	10.98
30	Vermont	21.3	2.3	10.65
31	Missouri	127.7	13.2	10.35
32	Kansas	252.9	25.7	10.15
33	South Carolina	105.4	10.5	10.00
34	Alabama	181.3	18.0	9.91
35	California	1804.6	178.7	9.90
36	Illinois	646.2	63.2	9.79
37	North Carolina	248.1	22.1	8.91
38	Nebraska	31.6	2.6	8.34
39	Alaska	33.4	2.7	8.14
40	Texas	863.5	55.5	6.43
41	Utah	48.4	2.8	5.81
42	Connecticut	227.0	9.8	4.31
43	Arizona	205.4	8.1	3.95
44	Louisiana	123.9	4.8	3.84
45	Wyoming	15.7	0.6	3.70
46	Colorado	490.6	13.6	2.77
47	North Dakota	26.0	0.5	2.04
48	Rhode Island	69.9	1.0	1.46
49	Montana	12.1	0.1	0.79
50	Minnesota	38.2	0.1	0.13

Table 3: Initial claims (in thousands), overpayments (in thousands), and overpayment rates (in percent). Cumulative data from 2020:Q3-2020:Q4, sorted from low to high. Louisiana had incomplete data.

Rank	State	Initial Claims	Overpayments	Overpayment Rate
1	South Dakota	15.5	4.3	27.44
2	Wisconsin	444.3	118.2	26.61
3	Idaho	97.2	20.6	21.22
4	Texas	1344.5	244.5	18.18
5	New Hampshire	85.9	14.7	17.15
6	Vermont	31.2	5.0	15.92
7	Massachusetts	656.6	102.9	15.67
8	Florida	1249.0	193.7	15.51
9	Mississippi	132.4	20.2	15.24
10	Ohio	583.8	85.0	14.56
11	Alabama	270.2	38.3	14.18
12	North Dakota	31.4	4.2	13.48
13	Colorado	293.4	38.7	13.18
14	Wyoming	25.0	3.0	12.10

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15	Michigan	496.4	58.1	11.71
16	Washington	582.2	64.7	11.12
17	Montana	55.9	6.1	10.92
18	Indiana	640.8	61.9	9.66
19	West Virginia	60.5	5.8	9.51
20	South Carolina	176.5	16.5	9.36
21	New Jersey	624.1	56.1	8.99
22	Alaska	119.2	9.9	8.27
23	Missouri	289.5	22.8	7.87
24	North Carolina	415.4	31.5	7.58
25	Arizona	275.2	19.8	7.21
26	Nebraska	74.4	5.1	6.83
27	Nevada	258.5	16.7	6.48
28	Maine	49.2	3.0	6.17
29	Arkansas	168.0	9.8	5.83
30	Utah	79.6	4.6	5.73
31	Minnesota	378.0	20.5	5.42
32	Oregon	195.4	8.0	4.08
33	New Mexico	121.3	4.9	4.07
34	Virginia	416.3	16.4	3.94
35	Rhode Island	95.2	3.7	3.92
36	Delaware	65.2	2.3	3.47
37	Oklahoma	147.1	5.0	3.42
38	Connecticut	192.5	6.1	3.18
39	Illinois	1403.3	40.3	2.87
40	Pennsylvania	765.0	18.1	2.36
41	Maryland	342.6	7.6	2.23
42	New York	2158.3	41.9	1.94
43	Kentucky	320.0	5.9	1.84
44	Tennessee	288.8	4.3	1.51
45	Georgia	1364.6	18.0	1.32
46	Hawaii	141.8	1.7	1.17
47	Iowa	167.4	2.0	1.17
48	California	5087.1	43.9	0.86
49	Kansas	483.2	3.6	0.75