

# Independent Resolutions Inc.

An Independent Review Organization

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## **DATE OF REVIEW:**

JUNE 11, 2007

## **IRO CASE #:**

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE OR SERVICES IN DISPUTE**

Chronic Pain Management 10 sessions

## **A DESCRIPTION OF THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR EACH PHYSICIAN OR OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDER WHO REVIEWED THE DECISION**

Board Certified

## **REVIEW OUTCOME**

Upon independent review the reviewer finds that the previous adverse determination/adverse determinations should be:

- Upheld (Agree)  
 Overturned (Disagree)  
 Partially Overturned (Agree in part/Disagree in part)

Provide a description of the review outcome that clearly states whether or not medical necessity exists for each of the health care services in dispute.

## **INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE IRO FOR REVIEW**

Office note, Dr., 02/08/02  
05/20/04  
Office note, Dr., 01/23/06  
Progress reports, 04/2/06 to 07/24/06, 11/27/06  
Functional capacity evaluation, 12/19/06  
Report, 01/12/07  
Office note, Dr., 01/24/07  
progress reports, 02/15/07 and 03/01/07  
Office note, Dr., 03/15/07  
Pre-authorization request, 03/20/07  
utilization review, 04/27/07 and 05/23/07  
Case assignment to IRO, 05/24/07  
Case notes

## **PATIENT CLINICAL HISTORY [SUMMARY]:**

The claimant is a female who tripped and fell on uneven pavement in xx/xx/xx, landing on her knees and face. She reportedly underwent L3-4 and L4-5 laminectomy and fusion in 02/02 and hardware removal in 02/04. Diagnoses included failed back syndrome and failed fusion.

On xx/xx/xx the claimant reportedly suffered a fractured left thumb under a heavy piece of equipment and underwent surgery the same day to reattach the thumb tip. She

complained of continued low back pain with lower extremity radiation which did not improve with conservative therapy including epidural steroid injections, physical therapy and rehab, medications and modified activity. She underwent psychological treatment for severe depression and anxiety.

A Functional Capacities Evaluation on 12/19/06 indicated that the claimant was able to work at a sedentary physical demand level. A request was made for authorization of ten sessions of a chronic pain management program; eight hours per day, times five days per week for two weeks.

### **ANALYSIS AND EXPLANATION OF THE DECISION INCLUDE CLINICAL BASIS, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS USED TO SUPPORT THE DECISION.**

The claimant is a female who tripped and fell on uneven pavement in xx/xx/xx, landing on her knees and face. She reportedly underwent L3-4 and L4-5 laminectomy and fusion in 02/02 and hardware removal in 02/04. Diagnoses included failed back syndrome and failed fusion.

On xx/xx/xx the claimant reportedly suffered a fractured left thumb under a heavy piece of equipment and underwent surgery the same day to reattach the thumb tip. She complained of continued low back pain with lower extremity radiation which did not improve with conservative therapy including epidural steroid injections, physical therapy and rehab, medications and modified activity. She underwent psychological treatment for severe depression and anxiety.

A Functional Capacities Evaluation on 12/19/06 indicated that the claimant was able to work at a sedentary physical demand level. A request was made for authorization of ten sessions of a chronic pain management program; eight hours per day, times five days per week for two weeks.

#### Official Disability Guidelines Treatment in Worker's Comp 2007 Updates, Chronic Pain, Low Back

"Chronic Pain Programs: Recommended where there is access to programs with proven successful outcomes. Also called Multidisciplinary pain programs or Interdisciplinary rehabilitation programs, these pain rehabilitation programs combine multiple treatments, and at the least, include psychological care along with physical therapy. While recommended, the research remains ongoing as to (1) what is considered the "gold-standard" content for treatment; (2) the group of patients that benefit most from this treatment; (3) the ideal timing of when to initiate treatment; (4) the intensity necessary for effective treatment; and (5) cost-effectiveness. It has been suggested that interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary care models for treatment of chronic pain may be the most effective way to treat this condition. ([Flor, 1992](#)) ([Gallagher, 1999](#)) ([Guzman, 2001](#)) ([Gross, 2005](#)) ([Sullivan, 2005](#)) ([Dysvik, 2005](#)) ([Airaksinen, 2006](#)) ([Schonstein, 2003](#)) ([Sanders, 2005](#)) Unfortunately, being a claimant may be a predictor of poor long-term outcomes. ([Robinson, 2004](#)) These treatment modalities are based on the biopsychosocial model, one that views pain and disability in terms of the interaction between physiological, psychological and social factors. ([Gatchel, 2005](#)) There appears to be little scientific evidence for the effectiveness of multidisciplinary biopsychosocial rehabilitation compared with other rehabilitation facilities for neck and shoulder pain, as opposed to low back pain and generalized pain syndromes. ([Karjalainen, 2003](#))

**Types of programs:** There is no one universal definition of what comprises interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary treatment. The most commonly referenced programs have been defined in the following general ways ([Stanos, 2006](#)):

(1) Multidisciplinary programs: Involves one or two specialists directing the services of a number of team members, with these specialists often having independent goals. These programs can be further subdivided into four levels of pain programs:

(a) Multidisciplinary pain centers (generally associated with academic centers and include research as part of their focus)

(b) Multidisciplinary pain clinics

(c) Pain clinics

(d) Modality-oriented clinics

(2) Interdisciplinary pain programs: Involves a team approach that is outcome focused and coordinated and offers goal-oriented interdisciplinary services. Communication on a minimum of a weekly basis is emphasized. The most intensive of these programs is referred to as a Functional Restoration Program, with a major emphasis on maximizing function versus minimizing pain. See [Functional restoration programs](#).

**Types of treatment:** Components suggested for interdisciplinary care include the following services delivered in an integrated fashion: (a) physical therapy (and possibly chiropractic); (b) medical care and supervision; (c) psychological and behavioral care; (d) psychosocial care; (e) vocational rehabilitation and training; and (f) education.

**Predictors of success and failure:** As noted, one of the criticisms of interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary rehabilitation programs is the lack of an appropriate screening tool to help to determine who will most benefit from this treatment. Retrospective research has examined decreased rates of completion of functional restoration programs, and there is ongoing research to evaluate screening tools prior to entry. ([Gatchel, 2006](#)) The following variables have been found to be negative predictors of efficacy of treatment with the programs as well as negative predictors of completion of the programs: (1) a negative relationship with the employer/supervisor; (2) poor work adjustment and satisfaction; (3) a negative outlook about future employment; (4) high levels of psychosocial distress (higher pretreatment levels of depression, pain and disability); (5) involvement in financial disability disputes; (6) greater rates of smoking; (7) duration of pre-referral disability time; (8) prevalence of opioid use; and (9) pre-treatment levels of pain. ([Linton, 2001](#)) ([Bendix, 1998](#)) ([McGeary, 2006](#)) ([McGeary, 2004](#)) ([Gatchel2, 2005](#)) See also [Chronic pain programs, early intervention](#); [Chronic pain programs, intensity](#); [Chronic pain programs, opioids](#); and [Functional restoration programs](#).

**Criteria for the general use of multidisciplinary pain management programs:**

Outpatient pain rehabilitation programs may be considered medically necessary when all of the following criteria are met:

(1) An adequate and thorough evaluation has been made.

(2) Previous methods of treating the chronic pain have been unsuccessful.

(3) The patient has a significant loss of ability to function independently resulting from the chronic pain.

(3) The patient is not a candidate where surgery would clearly be warranted.

(5) The patient exhibits motivation to change, and is willing to forgo secondary gains, including disability payments to effect this change.

Integrative summary reports that include treatment goals, progress assessment and stage of treatment, must be made available upon request and at least on a bi-weekly basis during the course of the treatment program. Treatment is not suggested for longer than 2 weeks without evidence of demonstrated efficacy as documented by subjective and objective gains.

Inpatient admissions for pain rehabilitation may be considered medically necessary only if there are significant medical complications meeting medical necessity criteria for acute inpatient hospitalization.

([BlueCross BlueShield, 2004](#)) ([Aetna, 2006](#)) See [Functional restoration programs](#)."

**A DESCRIPTION AND THE SOURCE OF THE SCREENING CRITERIA OR OTHER CLINICAL BASIS USED TO MAKE THE DECISION:**

- ACOEM- AMERICAN COLLEGE OF OCCUPATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL MEDICINE UM KNOWLEDGEBASE
- AHCPR- AGENCY FOR HEALTHCARE RESEARCH & QUALITY GUIDELINES
- DWC- DIVISION OF WORKERS COMPENSATION POLICIES OR GUIDELINES
- EUROPEAN GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC LOW BACK PAIN
- INTERQUAL CRITERIA
- MEDICAL JUDGEMENT, CLINICAL EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACCEPTED MEDICAL STANDARDS
- MERCY CENTER CONSENSUS CONFERENCE GUIDELINES
- MILLIMAN CARE GUIDELINES
- ODG- OFFICIAL DISABILITY GUIDELINES & TREATMENT GUIDELINES
- PRESSLEY REED, THE MEDICAL DISABILITY ADVISOR
- TEXAS GUIDELINES FOR CHIROPRACTIC QUALITY ASSURANCE & PRACTICE PARAMETERS
- TEXAS TACADA GUIDELINES
- TMF SCREENING CRITERIA MANUAL
- PEER REVIEWED NATIONALLY ACCEPTED MEDICAL LITERATURE (PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION)
- OTHER EVIDENCE BASED, SCIENTIFICALLY VALID, OUTCOME FOCUSED GUIDELINES (PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION)