

IRO NOTICE OF DECISION TEMPLATE – WCN

P-IRO Inc.

An Independent Review Organization

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DATE OF REVIEW: MAY 4, 2007

IRO CASE #:

DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE OR SERVICES IN DISPUTE

Right elbow lateral epicondyle release with topaz.

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

Board Certified Orthopedic Surgeon

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

Case Assignment from TDI
Denial letters from URA
Right elbow MRI, 01/12/07
Office notes, Dr., 01/23/07, 02/20/07, 03/14/07
Prescription for physical therapy, 01/23/07
Physical therapy evaluation, 02/06/07
Physical therapy daily records, 02/13/07 to 03/15/07

PATIENT CLINICAL HISTORY [SUMMARY]:

This claimant reported right elbow and forearm pain on 01/01/07 after lifting heavy bags. The claimant was diagnosed with right lateral epicondylitis and was treated conservatively with medication, an injection, elbow strap, physical therapy and work restrictions. The claimant continued to report discomfort despite the conservative treatments to date. The treating physician has requested a right elbow lateral epicondylar release with Topaz.

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

The claimant at this point appears to have lateral epicondylitis and has been treated with anti-inflammatory medications, an elbow strap, therapy and a single injection. The injection was noted to improve symptoms for a period of time but wore off. Prior peer review indicated the claimant did not meet criteria of six months of non-operative treatment. The Reviewer agrees with the prior peer review, but also believes that a second injection would be reasonable for the claimant if there was transient relief with a first injection. Often patients will improve after a second corticosteroid injection. With regard to the specific surgical procedure requested, there are no good long term studies demonstrating the efficacy of radiofrequency ablation for lateral epicondylar release. Standard treatment at this point is either an open release/debridement of the extensor carpi radialis brevis tendon or an arthroscopic release procedure. The release is typically performed with sharp dissection or an arthroscopic shaver and the Reviewer is unaware of use of the radiofrequency ablation for this procedure. There are concerns with using radiofrequency ablation in the joint. Therefore, multiple concerns would prevent the Reviewer from recommending this surgery at this time being medically necessary.

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
 - Official Disability Guidelines Fourth Edition Treatment in Worker’s Compensation 2006 p. 301
- 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)
 - Physical medicine & Rehabilitation. Second Edition. Braddom Chapter 38 p. 807- 809