

# I-Decisions Inc.

*An Independent Review Organization*

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**DATE OF REVIEW: OCTOBER 13, 2007**

**IRO CASE #:**

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

Right L5 nerve root block

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

M.D., Board Certified in pain management and anesthesiology under the American Board of Anesthesiologists.

## **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.

Based on Official Disability Guidelines, a right L5 nerve block (transforaminal epidural steroid injection) is not indicated.

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

Adverse Determination Letters, 9/7/07, 9/17/07

ODG Guidelines and Treatment Guidelines

Letter for IRO Consideration, 10/3/07

Dr., 8/29/07, 8/20/07, 7/19/07, 6/29/07, 8/27/07

Dr., 8/14/07

MRI Imaging Results, 6/13/07  
Diagnostic Imaging Reports, 6/20/07, 7/10/07, 7/11/07, 7/12/07

**PATIENT CLINICAL HISTORY [SUMMARY]:**

The patient was injured while working on xx/xx/xx. After that injury, he started having low back pain that radiated into the right lower extremity. He went on to have lumbar surgery (exact procedure not found in the records I reviewed) on 12/29/2004. He went back to work full-time on 07/07/2005. It is noted that around June/July 2006 the patient's pain returned. He ended up receiving "five separate injections" for this pain. From the notes that I have reviewed, these injections have been described as both lysis of epidural fibrosis and epidural steroid injections. Also according to the notes, the patient only received about two weeks' worth of pain relief from these interventional procedures. There is no mention of increased function from previous injections or a plan for the patient to be involved in physical therapy when receiving the right L5 nerve block.

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

Per Official Disability Guidelines, epidural steroid injections are considered to be successful during the diagnostic phase if the patient receives approximately 50-70% pain relief from baseline with evidence of improved function for at least 6-8 weeks after the injection is performed. Per the notes, the patient has received "five injections" which have been described as both epidural adhesiolysis and epidural steroid injections. They have been reported to have only provided the patient with two weeks of pain relief. There is no mention of how much pain relief was achieved or if there was any increase in function. Even if the patient received 100% pain relief, the pain relief only lasted for two weeks. Therefore, given that 6-8 weeks of pain relief was not achieved, I feel that a therapeutic epidural steroid injection is not indicated at this time based on the Official Disability Guidelines.

**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)