



## **IMED, INC.**

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### Notice of Independent Review Decision

**DATE OF REVIEW:** 04/21/08

**IRO CASE #:**

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

Item in dispute: Discography, lumbar, radiological supervision, and interpretation on 03/04/08

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

Board Certified in Pain Management  
Board Certified in Anesthesiology  
Board Certified in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

### **REVIEW OUTCOME**

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

Denial Upheld

### **PATIENT CLINICAL HISTORY (SUMMARY):**

The available records indicate the employee was injured in xx/xxxx with a gradual worsening of symptoms.

The employee was under the care of Dr. and tried a series of epidural injections with no benefit according to the records from 02/27/08, a referral to Dr. from Dr.. The impression was lumbar syndrome and lumbar radicular syndrome on 02/27/08. The recommendation was for provocative discogram.

There was additional information by Dr. for reconsideration of discogenic low back pain recommendation for discography.

Another preauthorization request was reviewed dated 03/05/08, again with a

denial. An appeal was dated 03/13/08. The request for discography was denied by Dr.

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

I have been sent this information to perform an IRO and to discuss discography, lumbar, radiological supervision, and interpretation. I cannot see any information in these records as to the medical necessity for these procedures. The recommendation for discography has repeatedly been denied in these records, and rightfully so according to the ***Official Disability Guidelines***.

The request for discography to determine the presence of intervertebral disc syndrome is a controversial subject. Its use has been historically questioned based on its reliance on subjective complaints and interpretation of such findings based on subjectivity. Workers' compensation mandates the use of ***Official Disability Guidelines***, and, ***Official Disability Guidelines*** indicate that discography is "not recommended". Many studies have concluded that the use of discography often results in questionable results. Many studies by Carragee have deduced that reproduction of patient's specific back complaints on injection of one or more discs is of limited diagnostic value. Positive discography was not highly predictive in identifying outcomes from spinal fusion. Furthermore, the ***Guidelines*** state that discography is not a sensitive test for radiculopathy and has no relevance confirmation. It is evident that these studies that are being done in a significant population, however, using strict ***Official Disability Guidelines***, the use of discography is discouraged and not recommended according to evidence-based literature.

Therefore, the denial of discography, radiological supervision, and interpretation on 03/04/08 is upheld.

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

1. ***OFFICIAL DISABILITY GUIDELINES***