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Notice of Independent Review Decision

Date of Review: 07-16-2008

IRO CASE #:

DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE OR SERVICES IN DISPUTE

Inpatient surgery for cervical anterior discectomy fusion at C4-5, C5-6 with plates and bengal cages with one (1) to two (2) day length of stay

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

Certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery, and fellowship-trained in surgery of the spine

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)

Injury date	Claim #	Review Type	ICD-9 DSMV	HCPCS/ NDC	Upheld/ Overturned
		Prospective	723.0 722.0	63075	Overturned

PATIENT CLINICAL HISTORY:

This xx-year-old claimant sustained a work-related injury on xx/xx/xx when his car was rammed by another vehicle. Two weeks later he was hit over the head with a chair. The patient has been diagnosed with displacement of cervical intervertebral disc without myelopathy, as well as spinal stenosis in the cervical region. The patient has had neck pain since the MVA in xx/xx, with associated symptoms that include headaches, neck stiffness, and bilateral upper extremity paresthesia. Treatment has included physical therapy, steroid injections, muscle relaxants and narcotic pain medication. The records show that as of 5/2008 the patient has increased neck pain and headaches, with decreased effectiveness of pain medications, and more pain in the right lateral neck and tingling into the right arm and hand.

ANALYSIS AND EXPLANATION OF THE DECISION INCLUDING CLINICAL BASIS, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS USED TO SUPPORT THE DECISION:

In the opinion of the Reviewer the request for inpatient surgery for cervical anterior discectomy at C4-5, C5-6 with plates and bengal cages, with one (1) to two (2) day length of stay is medically necessary and should be authorized. The Reviewer noted that the patient meets the ODG guidelines that provide for anterior cervical discectomy fusion (ACDF) surgery.

Specifically, the Reviewer noted that besides having neck pain and headaches since the injury, even with good conservative treatment, the patient continues to have bilateral radiculopathy with ODG required instability at both C4-5 and C5-6. The Reviewer commented that C4-5 and C5-6 are the most injured levels, although at age 62 the patient does have other asymptomatic degenerative changes, per the cervical spine MRIs done in 12/2007 and 4/2008.

The Reviewer added that according to ODG "Predictors of outcome of ACDF: Predictors of good outcome include...short duration of symptoms". The Reviewer also noted that ODG recognizes better outcomes with cage instrumentation needed with spinal stenosis cases, as in this patient, and ODG also notes a study showing 91% good results in plated allograft fusion for 2 levels, as is being proposed in this case. In the Reviewer's opinion, this medically necessary surgery should be approved as soon as possible.

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)