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**DATE OF REVIEW:** 03/17/2008

**IRO CASE #:**

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

Work Hardening 5 X wk X 2 wks 2-18-08 to 03-21-08

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

This case was reviewed by a Texas licensed MD, specializing in Orthopedic Surgery. The physician advisor has the following additional qualifications, if applicable:

ABMS Orthopaedic Surgery  
 TX DWC ADL

**REVIEW OUTCOME:**

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

Upheld

Health Care Service(s) in Dispute	CPT Codes	Date of Service(s)	Outcome of Independent Review
Work Hardening 5 X wk X 2 wks 2-18-08 to 03-21-08	97545, 97545	-	Upheld

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

No	Document Type	Provider or Sender	Page Count	Service Start Date	Service End Date
1	Office Visits		72	06/15/2007	02/11/2008
2	Physical Therapy		14	08/08/2007	09/12/2007
3	Diagnostic Testing			06/28/2007	12/14/2007
4	Surgery		7	07/12/2007	07/12/2007
5	Preauthorization		9	02/06/2008	02/26/2008

**PATIENT CLINICAL HISTORY [SUMMARY]:**

The request is for an IRO from Dr. for 10 work hardening sessions for left shoulder stiffness.

The patient is male who sustained a rotator cuff tear of the left shoulder at work. He had left rotator cuff repair, anterior acromioplasty, debridement of a labral tear arthroscopically and open biceps tenodesis. The patient has had 20 work hardening sessions. An FCE done on 12/26/07 revealed he was at a heavy PDL but with limited abduction, flexion and external rotation. At the end of 20 sessions it appears there is 90 degrees of flexion and 85 degrees of internal rotation. Dr. on 02/11/08 stated there was good range of motion. He noted actively "a little bit of restricted flexion and abduction and tenderness over the cuff".

Diagnostic tests: MRI prior to surgery and an arthrogram/MRI on 12/07  
The last study revealed an incomplete, not a full thickness, partial R/C tear, recurrent.  
FCE-12/25/07

Treatments: Surgery 07/12/07  
Physical therapy followed by 20 work hardening sessions.

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

The literature and peer-reviewed tests (ACOEM, Chapter 9, page 210-211, 2004 and ODG, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Treatment, 2006) document that older patients do not do as well as younger patients after rotator cuff repairs. This is the reason why it is recommended that in older individuals conservative treatment be tried for at least three months before considering surgical intervention. Also, tears of the long head of the biceps can almost always be managed conservatively because there is no consequent functional disability (ODG, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Treatment, 2006). This patient is now approximately 71/2 months post-operative and still has stiffness. This stiffness is in reasonable medical probability permanent. ODG does not recommend further rehab beyond 4 weeks. Therefore, based upon the above rationale and peer reviewed guidelines, 10 more sessions of work hardening are not certified.

Web based ODG 2008 13<sup>th</sup> ed. , shoulder: work hardening, work conditioning recommends 4 weeks or less.

#### **Criteria for admission to a Work Hardening Program:**

1. Physical recovery sufficient to allow for progressive reactivation and participation for a minimum of 4 hours a day for three to five days a week.
2. A defined return to work goal agreed to by the employer & employee:
  - a. A documented specific job to return to, OR
  - b. Documented on-the-job training
3. The worker must be able to benefit from the program. Approval of these programs should require a screening process that includes file review, interview and testing to determine likelihood of success in the program.
4. The worker must be no more than 2 years past date of injury. Workers that have not returned to work by two years post injury may not benefit.
5. Program timelines: Work Hardening Programs should be completed in 4 weeks consecutively or less.

#### **ODG Physical Therapy Guidelines – Work Conditioning**

10 visits over 8 weeks

See also [Physical therapy](#) for general PT guidelines

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

ODG:

ODG Online updated 02/08-Shoulder Treatment-work hardening/sork conditioning

