



Southwestern Forensic
Associates, Inc.

REVIEWER'S REPORT

DATE OF REVIEW: 10/29/09

IRO CASE #:

DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE OR SERVICES IN DISPUTE:

Four additional sessions of outpatient psychotherapy

DESCRIPTION OF QUALIFICATIONS OF REVIEWER:

M.D., board certified in General Psychiatry

REVIEW OUTCOME:

“Upon independent review, I find that the previous adverse determination or determinations should be (check only one):

Upheld (Agree)

Overturned (Disagree)

Partially Overturned (Agree in part/Disagree in part)

INFORMATION PROVIDED FOR REVIEW:

I reviewed the entire records submitted to the IRO including the outpatient records of the patient. There were notes describing this patient's condition, the treatments given, the psychotherapy sessions notes, and response.

INJURED EMPLOYEE CLINICAL HISTORY (Summary):

This patient was injured at work in xxxx. Since the injury he has a history of low back and left lower extremity pain complaints. He has had conservative care and surgical treatment. He also has had a month of multidisciplinary pain management in 2007. He takes narcotic pain medication, Neurontin, Soma, Zoloft, and clonazepam to treat his symptoms. Six psychotherapy sessions were provided and approved during 2009. The current request is for four additional sessions. I reviewed the notes from the therapy, and every note indicates that the patient was responding to treatment, was meeting his treatment goals, and no revision of the treatment goals was indicated. This was true on a note from 07/24/09, and without any explanation of the reason, on 07/24/09 the treating therapist indicated four more sessions were going to be requested.

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

For criteria, I used the Official Disability Guidelines criteria. The summary of the guideline states, "Consider separate psychotherapy, CBT referral after four weeks of lack of progress from physical therapy alone. Initial trial of three to four psychotherapy visits over two weeks with evidence of objective functional improvement, a total of six to ten visits over five to six weeks." In the same summary, a statement is made to consider separate psychotherapy if after four weeks there is lack of progress from physical therapy alone.

This patient has had conservative treatment and surgical treatment. He went through a pain management program in 2007, and then in 2009, he had six sessions of psychotherapy. The psychotherapy notes indicate some progress, and the therapist indicated goals were being met at the end of the six sessions, but according to the notes, there was not much difference between the start of therapy and the end of therapy. The request was made for four additional sessions with no indication of what was hoped to be achieved and no indication of what might have been preventing further progress. Therefore, based on the Official Disability Guidelines and Treatment Guidelines, the request did not meet medical necessity.

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

(Check any of the following that were used in the course of your review.)

- 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 judgment, 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 national accepted medical literature (provide a description).
- Other evidence-based, scientifically valid, outcome-focused guidelines (provide a description.)