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DATE OF REVIEW: 03/03/2010

IRO CASE #:

DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE OR SERVICES IN DISPUTE:

IRO - MAGNETIC RESONANCE (EG, PROTON) IMAGING, SPINAL CANAL AND CONTENTS, WITHOUT CONTRAST MATERIAL, FOLLOWED BY CONTRAST MATERIAL(S) AND FURTHER SEQUENCES; THORACIC

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 DO, specializing in Pain Management, Anesthesiology. The physician advisor has the following additional qualifications, if applicable:

ABMS Anesthesiology

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
IRO - MAGNETIC RESONANCE (EG, PROTON) IMAGING, SPINAL CANAL AND CONTENTS, WITHOUT CONTRAST MATERIAL, FOLLOWED BY CONTRAST MATERIAL(S) AND FURTHER SEQUENCES; THORACIC		-	Upheld

INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE IRO FOR REVIEW:

No	Document Type	Provider or Sender	Page Count	Service Start Date	Service End Date
1	Claim File		1	02/15/2010	02/15/2010
2	Initial Denial Letter		5	01/29/2010	02/04/2010
3	Op Report	Anesthesiology, PA	6	01/25/2010	01/25/2010
4	Diagnostic Test	Imaging	1	01/25/2010	01/25/2010
5	Appeal Request		2	02/02/2010	02/20/2010
6	Initial Denial Letter		6	01/29/2010	02/03/2010
7	Claim File		2	01/22/2010	01/22/2010
8	IRO Record Receipt		5	02/11/2010	02/11/2010
9	Initial Request		3	02/10/2010	02/10/2010
10	Claim File		1	02/11/2010	02/11/2010
11	Claim File		1	02/11/2010	02/11/2010
12	Claim File		1	02/11/2010	02/11/2010

PATIENT CLINICAL HISTORY [SUMMARY]:

Based on the records provided for review, the claimant has a date of injury of xx/xx/xx. The claimant is a female who suffers from lower back pain which radiates to both lower extremities. The claimant is noted to work for Lens Crafters, mechanism of injury is not provided. On 1-25-10 the claimant underwent a reprogramming of an intrathecal pump and stated her pain level reached 10/10.

The claimant's medications include Flextor, Baclofen, and Amrix.

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

There is no documentation provided which shows the claimant has clinical findings consistent with inflammatory mass at the tip of the catheter. There is no documentation showing increase in pain symptoms or development of neurological symptoms. These are the basis for the requested procedure and have not been met.

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

MRI's (magnetic resonance imaging)	<p>Recommended for indications below. MRI's are test of choice for patients with prior back surgery. Repeat MRI's are indicated only if there has been progression of neurologic deficit. (Bigos, 1999) (Mullin, 2000) (ACR, 2000) (AAN, 1994) (Aetna, 2004) (Airaksinen, 2006) (Chou, 2007) Magnetic resonance imaging has also become the mainstay in the evaluation of myelopathy. An important limitation of magnetic resonance imaging in the diagnosis of myelopathy is its high sensitivity. The ease with which the study depicts expansion and compression of the spinal cord in the myelopathic patient may lead to false positive examinations and inappropriately aggressive therapy if findings are interpreted incorrectly. (Seidenwurm, 2000) There is controversy over whether they result in higher costs compared to X-rays including all the treatment that continues after the more sensitive MRI reveals the usual insignificant disc bulges and herniations. (Jarvik-JAMA, 2003) In addition, the sensitivities of the only significant MRI parameters, disc height narrowing and anular tears, are poor, and these findings alone are of limited clinical importance. (Videman, 2003) Imaging studies are used most practically as confirmation studies once a working diagnosis is determined. MRI, although excellent at defining tumor, infection, and nerve compression, can be too sensitive with regard to degenerative disease findings and commonly displays pathology that is not responsible for the patient's symptoms. With low back pain, clinical judgment begins and ends with an understanding of a patient's life and circumstances as much as with their specific spinal pathology. (Carragee, 2004) Diagnostic imaging of the spine is associated with a high rate of abnormal findings in asymptomatic individuals.</p>
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Herniated disk is found on magnetic resonance imaging in 9% to 76% of asymptomatic patients; bulging disks, in 20% to 81%; and degenerative disks, in 46% to 93%. ([Kinkade, 2007](#)) Baseline MRI findings do not predict future low back pain. ([Borenstein, 2001](#)) MRI findings may be preexisting. Many MRI findings (loss of disc signal, facet arthrosis, and end plate signal changes) may represent progressive age changes not associated with acute events. ([Carragee, 2006](#)) MRI abnormalities do not predict poor outcomes after conservative care for chronic low back pain patients. ([Kleinstück, 2006](#)) The new ACP/APS guideline as compared to the old AHCPR guideline is more forceful about the need to avoid specialized diagnostic imaging such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) without a clear rationale for doing so. ([Shekelle, 2008](#)) A new meta-analysis of randomized trials finds no benefit to routine lumbar imaging (radiography, MRI, or CT) for low back pain without indications of serious underlying conditions, and recommends that clinicians should refrain from routine, immediate lumbar imaging in these patients. ([Chou-Lancet, 2009](#)) Despite guidelines recommending parsimonious imaging, use of lumbar MRI increased by 307% during a recent 12-year interval. When judged against guidelines, one-third to two-thirds of spinal computed tomography imaging and MRI may be inappropriate. ([Deyo, 2009](#)) As an alternative to MRI, a pain assessment tool named Standardized Evaluation of Pain (StEP), with six interview questions and ten physical tests, identified patients with radicular pain with high sensitivity (92%) and specificity (97%). The diagnostic accuracy of StEP exceeded that of a dedicated screening tool for neuropathic pain and spinal magnetic resonance imaging. ([Scholz, 2009](#)) Clinical quality-based incentives are associated with less advanced imaging, whereas satisfaction measures are associated with more rapid and advanced imaging, leading Richard Deyo, in the Archives of Internal Medicine to call the fascination with lumbar spine imaging an idolatry. ([Pham, 2009](#)) There is support for MRI, depending on symptoms and signs, to rule out serious pathology such as tumor, infection, fracture, and cauda equina syndrome. Patients with severe or progressive neurologic deficits from lumbar disc herniation, or subjects with lumbar radiculopathy who do not respond to initial appropriate conservative care, are also candidates for lumbar MRI to evaluate potential for spinal interventions including injections or surgery. See also [ACR Appropriateness Criteria™](#). See also [Standing MRI](#).

Indications for imaging -- Magnetic resonance imaging:

- Thoracic spine trauma: with neurological deficit
- Lumbar spine trauma: trauma, neurological deficit
- Lumbar spine trauma: seat belt (chance) fracture (If focal, radicular findings or other neurologic deficit)
- Uncomplicated low back pain, suspicion of cancer, infection, other "red flags"
- Uncomplicated low back pain, with radiculopathy, after at least 1 month conservative therapy, sooner if severe or progressive neurologic deficit. (For unequivocal evidence of radiculopathy, see AMA Guides, 5th Edition, page 382-383.) ([Andersson, 2000](#))
- Uncomplicated low back pain, prior lumbar surgery
- Uncomplicated low back pain, cauda equina syndrome
- Myelopathy (neurological deficit related to the spinal cord), traumatic
- Myelopathy, painful
- Myelopathy, sudden onset
- Myelopathy, stepwise progressive
- Myelopathy, slowly progressive
- Myelopathy, infectious disease patient
- Myelopathy, oncology patient

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
- X 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)

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE COMPLAINT PROCESS: The Texas Department of Insurance requires Independent Review Organizations to be licensed to perform Independent Review in Texas. To contact the Texas Department of Insurance regarding any complaint, you may call or write the Texas Department of Insurance. The telephone number is 1-800-578-4677 or in writing at: Texas Department of Insurance, PO Box 149104 Austin TX, 78714. In accordance with Rule 102.4(h), a copy of this Independent Review Organization (IRO) Decision was sent to the carrier, the requestor and claimant via facsimile or U.S. Postal Service from the office of the IRO on 03/03/2010.

