



Medical Review Institute of America, Inc.  
America's External Review Network

DATE OF REVIEW: May 18, 2010

IRO Case #:

**Description of the services in dispute:**

This is a retrospective request for PT.

**A description of the qualifications for each physician or other health care provider who reviewed the decision:**

This physician reviewer is board certified by the American Board of Orthopedic Surgeons in Orthopedic Surgery and has completed a Fellowship in Spine Surgery. This reviewer is a member of American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, North American Spine Society, and the American Medical Association.

**Review Outcome:**

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

Based on ODG guidelines, medical necessity has been established for physical therapy from 05/16/07-06/13/07, physical therapy from 10/13/08-01/20/09, and physical therapy from 02/11/10-03/22/10.

**Information provided to the IRO for review:**

Records received from the State:

Notice to Medical Review Institute of America, INC of Case Assignment, 05/19/10 (1 page)

Flahive, Ogden and Layton, Letter from, 04/28/10 (1 page)

Confirmation of Receipt of a Request for a Review by an Independent Review Organization (IRO), 04/28/10 (5 pages)

Request for a Review by an Independent Review Organization, 04/21/10 (3 pages)

HDI, Reconsideration/appeal of adverse determination, 04/20/10 (2 pages)

HDI, Utilization review determination, 04/02/10 (2 pages)

CD-1 for

Records Received from Louisiana Physical Therapy Centers of Pineville, LA:

Patient status report, 04/16/10 (1 page)

Clinic note, 04/12/10 (2 pages)

Clinic note, 03/25/10 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 03/23/10 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 03/22/10 (2 pages)  
Clinic note, 03/19/10 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 03/18/10 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 03/16/10 (2 pages)  
Clinic note, 03/12/10 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 03/11/10 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 03/10/10 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 03/04/10 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 03/03/10 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 03/02/10 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 02/25/10 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 02/23/10 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 02/18/10 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 02/17/10 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 02/16/10 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 02/11/10 (2 pages)  
Clinic note, 03/03/09 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 01/30/09 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 01/29/09 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 01/27/09 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 01/23/09 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 01/22/09 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 01/20/09 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 12/12/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 12/11/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 12/10/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 12/05/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 12/04/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 12/03/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 11/26/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 11/25/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 11/21/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 11/18/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 11/14/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 11/13/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 11/06/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 11/05/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 11/04/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 10/31/08 (1 page)

Clinic note, 10/29/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 10/27/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 10/24/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 10/22/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 10/20/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 10/17/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 10/15/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 10/13/08 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 07/05/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 07/03/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 06/29/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 06/28/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 06/26/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 06/22/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 06/20/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 06/18/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 06/15/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 06/13/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 06/11/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 06/08/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 06/06/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 06/04/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 06/01/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 05/31/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 05/30/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 05/25/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 05/24/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 05/22/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 05/18/07 (1 page)  
Clinic note, 05/16/07 (1 page)

**Records Received from Spine Institute of LA:**

Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 03/24/10 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 02/04/10 (1 page)  
Institute of Louisiana, Procedure note, 01/21/10 (1 page)  
Institute of Louisiana, Preop history and physical examination, 01/06/10 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 01/06/10 (1 page)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 12/09/09 (1 page)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 10/14/09 (1 page)  
Institute of Louisiana, evaluation, 10/14/09 (3 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, MRI interpretation, 10/07/09 (1 page)

Institute of Louisiana, CT interpretation, 10/07/09 (1 page)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 09/17/09 (1 page)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 06/24/09 (1 page)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 05/08/09 (1 page)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 03/30/09 (1 page)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 02/06/09 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 12/18/08 (3 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 11/07/08 (1 page)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 10/06/08 (1 page)  
Hospital Shreveport, 09/25/08 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Procedure note, 09/25/08 (1 page)  
Institute of Louisiana, Preop history and physical examination, 09/16/08 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 09/16/08 (1 page)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 08/26/08 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 07/30/08 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Peer review, 07/08/08 (1 page)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 06/17/08 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 05/13/08 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 04/08/08 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 02/19/08 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 02/06/08 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, MRI interpretation, 02/06/08 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 01/08/08 (3 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 11/29/07 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 10/30/07 (3 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 09/11/07 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 07/18/07 (1 page)  
Institute of Louisiana, MRI interpretation, 06/27/07 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 06/27/07 (3 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Physical therapy initial evaluation, 06/12/07 (2 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Clinic note, 06/12/07 (3 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Initial evaluation, 05/10/07 (4 pages)  
Institute of Louisiana, Independent MRI interpretation, 06/27/06 (3 pages)

### **Patient clinical history [summary]**

The patient is a male who sustained an injury on xx/xx/xx. An MRI of the lumbar spine dated 06/27/06 reported findings of moderate to severe lumbar stenosis at the L4–5 and L3–4 levels. A clinical note dated 05/10/07 reported the patient was injured when he slipped at the top of a set of small steps and fell. The patient complained of 5/10 pain. The physical examination reported the patient had muscle spasms and limited range of motion. The physical examination note dated

06/13/07 reported the patient had completed 13 visits with significant improvement. The note reported the patient had decreased pain level by two grades, increased range of motion by 25%, increased strength by half a grade, and was instructed in a home program. An electrodiagnostic study dated 06/27/07 reported no evidence of radiculopathy, neuropathy, or myelopathy. The physical therapy note dated 07/05/07 reported the patient had completed 20 visits and was discharged to a home program. A clinical note dated 11/29/07 reported the patient complained of neck, shoulder, arm, low back, and leg pain. An electrodiagnostic study of the upper extremities dated 01/10/08 reported findings of mild bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome and no electrodiagnostic evidence of radiculopathy. The MRI of the cervical spine dated 02/06/08 reported findings of left sided HNP and displacement of the cervical cord in the left C5 nerve root at the C4-5 level. The MRI also reported evidence of spondylosis at the C5-6 and C6-7 level. An operative report dated 09/25/08 reported the patient underwent anterior cervical discectomy and fusion at the C4-5, C5-6, and C6-7 levels. A physical therapy note dated 12/10/08 reported the patient had made good progress with therapy status post ACDF. It appeared the patient had completed 22 sessions of post-operative physical therapy. The note reported the patient had met all short term goals. The physical therapy note dated 01/20/09 reported the patient had completed what appeared to be 25 visits status post surgery. A physical therapy note dated 03/03/09 reported the patient was discharged to a home exercise program. A clinical note dated 09/17/09 reported the patient complained of 7/10 pain, that was mainly in the back and lower extremities. An MRI of the lumbar spine dated 10/14/09 reported the patient had evidence of nerve root involvement at the L5 and S1 nerve roots. A CT scan of the cervical spine dated 10/07/09 reported solid arthrodesis at C4-C7. An electrodiagnostic study of the lower extremities dated 10/14/09 reported no evidence of radiculopathy. A procedure note dated 01/21/10 reported the patient underwent a laminectomy at the L5 and subtotal laminectomy at L4. A clinical note dated 02/04/10 reported the patient complained of 6/10 pain and was 10 days status post lumbar laminectomies. The patient was recommended for physical therapy. A physical therapy note dated 03/16/10 reported the patient complained of 5/10 pain. The note reported the patient had reduced motor strength and range of motion. The note reported the patient had not met all short and long term goals. The note reported the patient had completed 14 visits status post surgical intervention. A physical therapy note dated 03/22/10 reported the patient complained of 3/10 pain. The patient was noted to continue to have decreased range of motion and motor strength. The patient was noted to have been instructed in low back school and decreased pain level by two grades. It appeared the patient had completed 17 visits of post-operative treatment. A clinical note dated 03/24/10 reported the patient had slightly limited range of motion of the lumbar spine with no tenderness or spasms. The patient was recommended to continue therapy. A clinical note dated 04/12/10 reported the patient complained of 3/10 pain. The patient had completed 20 sessions of post-operative physical therapy. The note reported the patient was discharged to a home program secondary to no authorization from the insurance carrier to continue treatment. The note dated 04/16/10 reported the patient continued to have functional deficits and was recommended to continue treatment.

**Analysis and explanation of the decision include clinical basis, findings and conclusions used to**

**support the decision.**

The patient initially presented on 05/10/07, status post a work related fall. The patient was noted to have decreased lumbar spine range of motion. The patient began physical therapy on 05/16/07, and had completed 13 sessions of 06/13/07. The Official Disability Guidelines recommend up to 10 physical therapy visits for the diagnosis of lumbar sprain or intervertebral disc disorders without myelopathy. The note indicates the patient had met all short term goals and was educated on a home exercise program. The patient had completed sufficient formal therapy on 06/13/07 for the initial condition. The patient would have benefited from the physical therapy treatment from 05/16/07–06/13/07. The patient would not have required additional physical therapy from 06/15/07–07/05/07, when he completed 7 additional therapy sessions that exceeded evidence based guidelines. The documentation indicates the patient underwent anterior cervical discectomy at the C4–C7 levels on 09/25/08. The patient began post-operative therapy on 10/13/08, and had completed 22 sessions on 12/10/08. The patient was noted to have met all short term goals. The patient continued with physical therapy and had completed approximately 25 sessions of post-operative treatment on 01/20/09. The Official Disability Guidelines recommend up to 24 post-operative physical therapy sessions for patients who are status post anterior cervical discectomy and fusion. The patient had completed sufficient formal therapy as of 01/20/09 and was capable of continuing to improve with a home exercise program. The patient would have benefited from post-operative treatment from 10/13/08–01/20/09. The patient would not have benefited from the approximately six additional sessions from 01/22/09–03/03/09, at which time he was discharged to a home exercise program. The clinical documentation also indicates that the patient went on to undergo an L4–L5 lumbar laminectomy on 01/21/10. The patient began post-operative physical therapy on 02/11/10, and had completed approximately 17 sessions of treatment on 03/22/10. The patient had made minimal functional improvements with post-operative treatment. The patient had completed sufficient formal therapy and should have been capable of continuing to improve with a home exercise program as of 03/22/10. The patient would have benefited from post-operative treatment from 02/11/10–03/22/10. The patient would not have warranted additional physical therapy treatment from 03/23/10–04/12/10, in which it appears the patient had completed three additional sessions. The Official Disability Guidelines recommend up to 16 physical therapy visits for patients who are status post lumbar laminectomy. Given the clinical history of the patient to include two surgical interventions and initial treatment, medical necessity has been established for physical therapy from 05/16/07–06/13/07, physical therapy from 10/13/08–01/20/09, and physical therapy from 02/11/10–03/22/10.

**A description and the source of the screening criteria or other clinical basis used to make the decision:**

Official Disability Guidelines, Neck and Upper Back Chapter

Physical Therapy Guidelines

Displacement of cervical intervertebral disc (ICD9 722.0):

Medical treatment: 10 visits over 8 weeks

Post-injection treatment: 1–2 visits over 1 week

Post-surgical treatment (discectomy/laminectomy): 16 visits over 8 weeks

Post-surgical treatment (fusion, after graft maturity): 24 visits over 16 weeks

Official Disability Guidelines, Low Back Chapter

Physical Therapy Guidelines

Lumbar sprains and strains (ICD9 847.2):

10 visits over 8 weeks

Intervertebral disc disorders without myelopathy (ICD9 722.1; 722.2; 722.5; 722.6; 722.8):

Medical treatment: 10 visits over 8 weeks

Post-injection treatment: 1-2 visits over 1 week

Post-surgical treatment (discectomy/laminectomy): 16 visits over 8 weeks

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