

# **INDEPENDENT REVIEWERS OF TEXAS, INC.**

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## Notice of Independent Review Decision

**DATE OF REVIEW:** 08/25/11

**IRO CASE NO.:**

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

Item in dispute: 97545 – work hardening  
97546 – work hardening

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

Texas Board Certified General Surgeon, FACS  
Texas Board Certified in Internal Medicine, ABIM

**REVIEW OUTCOME**

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

Denial Upheld

**INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE IRO FOR REVIEW**

1. Clinical notes dated 09/17/10 through 04/26/11
2. Therapy notes dated 09/22/10 through 02/25/11
3. MRI of the right lower extremity dated 10/26/10
4. Radiology report dated 11/18/10
5. Peer review dated 01/19/11
6. Radiology report dated 04/25/11
7. Previous utilization reviews dated 05/10/11, 05/23/11, 07/28/11, and 08/05/11
8. **Official Disability Guidelines**

**PATIENT CLINICAL HISTORY (SUMMARY):**

The employee is a female who sustained an injury to her right knee.

The clinical note dated xx/xx/xx details the employee's occupation requiring a light physical demand level. The employee throughout the testing was noted to be able to perform the light physical demand level.

The clinical note dated 03/01/11 detailed the employee continuing with right knee pain. The employee rated the pain as 5/10 to 6/10 and described it as a throbbing and sharp sensation. Extended walking, sitting, and standing exacerbated the pain. The employee was able to demonstrate 0-110 degrees of range of motion with 5/5 strength throughout. Sensation was noted to be within normal limits. The note further detailed the employee may be able to perform at a light physical demand level.

The clinical note dated 04/26/11 detailed the employee demonstrated 0-125 degrees of range of motion.

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

The documentation submitted for review elaborates the employee complaining of ongoing right knee pain. Evidence-based guidelines recommend ten sessions of a work conditioning program provided the employee meets specific criteria. The documentation details the employee having completed at least ten sessions of a work conditioning program. This request exceeds guideline recommendations, as no exceptional factors were noted in the documentation. Additionally, during the Functional Capacity Evaluation, the employee was able to demonstrate ability to perform at a light physical demand level. The employee's occupation requires a light physical demand level. Given the employee meeting the physical requirements of her occupation as well as the excessive nature, this request does not meet guideline recommendations. As such, the documentation submitted for this review does not support this request at this time.

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

***Official Disability Guidelines Pain Chapter***, On-Line Version:

Work conditioning, work hardening

Recommended as an option, depending on the availability of quality programs. [NOTE: See specific body part chapters for detailed information on Work conditioning & work hardening.] See especially the Low Back Chapter, for more information and references. The Low Back WH & WC Criteria are copied below.

Criteria for admission to a Work Hardening (WH) Program:

WC amounts to an additional series of intensive physical therapy (PT) visits required beyond a normal course of PT, primarily for exercise training/supervision (and would be contraindicated if there are already significant psychosocial, drug or attitudinal barriers to recovery not addressed by these programs). See also Physical therapy for general PT guidelines. WC visits will typically be more intensive than regular PT visits, lasting 2 or 3 times as long.

And, as with all physical therapy programs, Work Conditioning participation does not preclude concurrently being at work.

Timelines: 10 visits over 4 weeks, equivalent to up to 30 hours.