



Southwestern Forensic
Associates, Inc.

REVIEWER'S REPORT

DATE OF REVIEW: 12/06/11

IRO CASE #:

DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE OR SERVICES IN DISPUTE:

Epidural lumbar block L4-L5

DESCRIPTION OF QUALIFICATIONS OF REVIEWER:

M.D., board certified orthopedic surgeon with extensive experience in the evaluation and treatment of patients suffering low back pain and cervical spine pain

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:

1. SWF forms
2. TDI referral forms
3. Certification page
4. Denial letters, 10/10/11 and 10/31/11
5. Carrier records
6. Letter 11/23/11
7. ODG 2011 Low Back Chapter, epidural steroid injection therapeutic passage, series of three epidural steroid injections passage, and epidural steroid injections diagnostic passage
8. Chiropractic clinical notes, 08/02/11 and 06/27/11 including request for approval for therapy
9. M.D., four entries 09/07/11 through 11/09/11
10. Fax cover sheet, 10/21/11
11. X-ray of lumbar spine, 07/12/11

13. MRI scan, lumbosacral spines, 07/13/11

INJURED EMPLOYEE CLINICAL HISTORY (Summary):

The claimant is a male who sustained an injury at work on xx/xx/xx. He was pulling tree limbs when he suffered a fall in a sit-down fashion (typical pratfall). He has had persistent pain in the cervical spine and the lumbar spine. He has had pain radiating into both upper extremities and both lower extremities. He has complained of numbness. On physical examination, he has been noted to have tenderness in both the cervical and lumbar spines with limited motion in both areas. He has weakness of hand grip. Deep tendon reflexes are 2+ and equal bilaterally in both upper and lower extremities. He has undergone an MRI scan of the lumbar spines. He was unable to cooperate with an MRI scan of the cervical spines. An epidural steroid injection in the region of L4-L5 has been recommended. The findings of the MRI scan of the lumbar spines revealed a diminished disc signal at L4-L5 with a small annular bulge at L3-L4 and L4-L5. He has multiple level degenerative disc disease. The request to perform epidural steroid injection at level L4-L5 was considered and denied. It was reconsidered and denied.

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

At the present time, there is no objective physical finding which would allow for the diagnosis of radiculopathy. Epidural steroid injections would not be justifiable on a therapeutic basis. While epidural steroid injections in the lumbar spine region could be potentially justifiable on a diagnostic basis, there is concern that he has both cervical and lumbar complaints of pain, which could make diagnostic epidural steroid injections difficult to justify. At the present time, it would appear that the prior denial of epidural steroid injection was appropriate and should be upheld.

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.)