



Southwestern Forensic  
Associates, Inc.

**REVIEWER'S REPORT**

**DATE OF REVIEW:** 12/28/10

**IRO CASE #:**

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

Subtotal laminectomy at L4, re-do laminectomy at L5, discectomy L4/L5 and L5/S1, interbody fusion at L5/S1, and posterolateral fusion at L4 to the sacrum with segmental fixation, and iliac crest bone graft

**DESCRIPTION OF QUALIFICATIONS OF REVIEWER:**

M.D., board certified orthopedic surgeon with extensive experience in the evaluation and treatment of patient suffering axial spinal problems

**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. Denial letters, 10/22/10, 11/01/10, and 09/22/10
4. IRO request
5. URA records
6. Clinical notes, 01/13/09, 07/13/10, 08/20/10, 09/22/10, 06/02/10, and 02/26/10
7. MRI scan, lumbar spines, 08/13/10
8. Operative report, 02/15/10, laminectomy/discectomy, L4/L5
9. Fax cover sheets

**INJURED EMPLOYEE CLINICAL HISTORY (Summary):**

The injured employee is a male who suffered a straining injury to his lumbar spine while trying to move a heavy valve from its location to a position under a forklift. He felt a pop in his lumbar spine and has had persistent pain subsequently. He has had radicular pain in his right lower extremity. An MRI scan of the lumbar spine performed revealed a right paracentral herniated nucleus pulposus at L4/L5 extending into the neurological foramen. After failing conservative treatment, the injured employee underwent lumbar laminectomy/discectomy at L4/L5 on 02/15/10. He had resolution of his right-sided radicular pain. He has subsequently had a recurrence of pain. He has positive straight leg raising tests. He has had another MRI scan performed on 08/13/10 revealing epidural fibrosis at L5/S1 extending to the S1 nerve root. The current request is for subtotal laminectomy, L4, with re-do laminectomy at L5 and discectomy at L4/L5 and L5/S1 with interbody fusion at L5 through S1 and posterolateral fusion L4 through the sacrum including segmental fixation and iliac crest bone graft. This request has been considered and denied, reconsidered and denied.

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

There is no documentation of nonoperative treatment under current circumstances. There is no documentation of physical therapy. The injured employee is a smoker, and smoking is a relative contraindication to the performance of lumbar fusion. The progression of attempted surgical fusion has a higher likelihood of progressing to nonunion under such circumstances. Psychological evaluation has not been performed as is current practice. There is no documentation of segmental instability.

**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, 2008,Spine Chapter, Discography passage.
- 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.)