



Medwork Independent Review

5840 Arndt Rd., Ste #2
Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701-9729
1-800-426-1551 | 715-552-0746
Fax: 715-552-0748
Independent.Review@medworkiro.com
www.medwork.org



NOTICE OF MEDWORK INDEPENDENT REVIEW DECISION WORKERS' COMPENSATION - WC

DATE OF REVIEW: 11/19/2013

IRO CASE #:

DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE OR SERVICES IN DISPUTE

Lumbar epidural steroid injections.

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

Texas State Licensed MD Board Orthopedic Surgeon.

REVIEW OUTCOME

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

- Upheld (Agree)
 Overturned (Disagree)
 Partially Overturned (Agree in part/Disagree in part)

Provide a description of the review outcome that clearly states whether or not medical necessity exists for each of the health care services in dispute.

INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE IRO FOR REVIEW

PATIENT CLINICAL HISTORY:

The patient was reportedly injured while working, although the records provided did not reveal an injury mechanism. The patient was treated medically and then surgically for a herniated disk at L5-S1. The lateral treatment was performed in December 2004 with a laminectomy with a revision performed in November 2005. Despite ongoing treatments, including facet and epidural injections, the claimant continues to be symptomatic.

There was a prior lumbar MRI from April 21, 2006, revealing scar tissue affecting the right lateral recess at L5-S1. Electrodiagnostics from April 2006 discuss the mild right S1 radiculopathy with a CT myelogram from April 2007 discussing disk bulges at L3-L4 and L4-L5. The patient has been most recently considered for another lumbar epidural steroid injection. The patient was noted most recently per the treating provider to have had significant relief from the last epidural steroid injection. The patient was noted to have a reduced Achilles reflex at 1/4 and reduced plantar flexion at 4/5, with increasing right lower extremity symptomatology.



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The documentation revealed that the patient had had a dramatic response to the prior epidural steroid injection, that being 50% to 70% dramatic pain reduction and decreased pain medication for several months.

An MRI from October 30, 2013, revealed stenosis at L5-S1 "impinging the exiting bilateral L5 nerve roots...laminectomy defect..." was noted. The patient was noted to have failed treatment with restricted activities and medications overall. The "patient reported greater than 79% improvement that lasted more than 6 weeks." Actually, it was the specific documentation with regard to efficacy of the prior epidural steroid injection, and that was noted on July 29, 2013.

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

The patient has objective findings of radiculopathy now reasonably corroborated by the most recent MRI. The patient's injection consideration is at the level that it would be expected to be appropriate for the radiculopathy, and based on the prior responses to prior epidural steroid injection treatments, at this time the request is reasonable and medical necessary and meets criteria for the referenced *Official Disability Guidelines*.

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

- 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
- 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)