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***An Independent Review Organization***

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***Notice of Independent Review Decision***

***Case Number:***

***Date of Notice:*** 02/26/2016

***Review Outcome:***

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

Anesthesiology And Pain Management

***Description of the service or services in dispute:***

Lumbar epidural steroid injection under fluoroscopy at L5-S1

***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)

***Patient Clinical History (Summary)***

The patient is a male who reported an injury on XX/XX/XX. The mechanism of injury was not provided in the medical records. The request was previously denied on XX/XX/XX, given the patient's physical examination failed to establish the presence of active radiculopathy and there were no imaging studies/electrodiagnostic results submitted for review, as required by current evidence based guidelines. The request was again denied on XX/XX/XX, given there was no evidence of radiculopathy on exam to support an epidural steroid injection. There was no magnetic resonance imaging, but there was a prior reference that showed only bulges. This, too, would not support an ESI, as per ODG criteria. Finally, the physician claimed that the prior ESI on XX/XX/XX, provided great benefit but no notes were sent to verify that. The evaluation performed on XX/XX/XX indicated the patient had complaints of pain to the lower back and lower extremities. It was noted the patient had undergone epidural steroid injections in the past, with documented 65% pain relief for over 6 months at a time. On the physical exam, the patient complained of severe pain to the lower flank. Range of motion of the lumbar spine was limited secondary to pain.

***Analysis and Explanation of the Decision include Clinical Basis, Findings and Conclusions used to support the decision.***

According to the Official Disability Guidelines, epidural steroid injections are recommended as an option for treatment of radicular pain for patients who are initially unresponsive to conservative treatment (exercises, physical methods, NSAIDs, and muscle relaxants). The guidelines also state radiculopathy must be documented by physical examination and corroborated by imaging studies and/or electrodiagnostic testing. The documentation submitted for review failed to provide evidence of neurological deficits on the physical exam corroborated by imaging studies and/or electrodiagnostic testing. Also, there was no documentation indicating the patient had failed all previous measures of conservative treatment. Furthermore, details were not provided regarding the previous epidural steroid injections, such as, the date the last injection took place and the levels at which the injections were performed. Due to the lack of documentation, the previous adverse determination for the requested lumbar epidural steroid injection under fluoroscopy at L5-S1 is

upheld

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

- ACOEM-America College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine um
- knowledgebase AHCPR-Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Guidelines
- DWC-Division of Workers Compensation Policies and 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 and Treatment
- Guidelines Pressley Reed, the Medical Disability Advisor
- Texas Guidelines for Chiropractic Quality Assurance and Practice
- Parameters Texas TACADA Guidelines
- TMF Screening Criteria Manual
- Peer Reviewed Nationally Accepted Médical **Literature** (Provide a description)
- Other evidence based, scientifically valid, outcome focused guidelines (Provide a description)