Texas Department of Insurance
Division of Workers' Compensation
Medical Fee Dispute Resolution, MS-48
7551 Metro Center Drive, Suite 100 • Austin, Texas 78744-1609

MEDICAL FEE DISPUTE RESOLUTION FINDINGS AND DECISION

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Requestor Name and Address:	
VISTA HEALTHCARE 4301 VISTA RD PASADENA TX 77503	MFDR Tracking #: M4-03-4577-01
	DWC Claim #:
	Injured Employee:
Respondent Name and Box #:	Date of Injury:
CONTINENTAL CASUALTY CO Box #: 47	Employer Name:
	Insurance Carrier #:

PART II: REQUESTOR'S POSITION SUMMARY

Requestor's Position Summary: "Vista Healthcare charges the above-referenced services at a fair and reasonable rate. Specifically, these rates are based upon a comparison of charges to other Carriers and the amount of reimbursement received for these same or similar services. The amount of reimbursement deemed to be fair and reasonable by Vista Healthcare is at a minimum of 70% of billed charges. This is supported by a managed care contract with 'Focus' that is attached as Exhibit 1."

Amount in Dispute: $6,097.46

PART III: RESPONDENT'S POSITION SUMMARY

Respondent's Position Summary: "Carrier's rate of reimbursement in this case not only meets but exceeds the Act's criteria for payment in all respects. The Provider has the burden of proof in this case. As stated by the MRD in prior ASC disputes, regardless of the carrier's application of its methodology, lack of methodology, or response, the burden is on the provider to show that the amount of reimbursement requested is fair and reasonable."

PART IV: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Date(s) of Service	Denial Code(s)	Disputed Service	Amount in Dispute	Amount Due
4/17/2002	F, 906, M, 722	Outpatient Surgery	$6,097.46	$0.00
			Total Due:	$0.00

PART V: REVIEW OF SUMMARY, METHODOLOGY AND EXPLANATION

Texas Labor Code §413.011(a-d), titled *Reimbursement Policies and Guidelines*, and Division rule at 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1, titled *Use of the Fee Guidelines*, effective October 7, 1991 set out the reimbursement guidelines.

This request for medical fee dispute resolution was received by the Division on March 25, 2003. Pursuant to Division rule at 28 TAC §133.307(g)(3), effective January 1, 2003, 27 TexReg 12282, applicable to disputes filed on or after January 1, 2003, the Division notified the requestor on April 8, 2003 to send additional documentation relevant to the fee dispute as set forth in the rule.

1. For the services involved in this dispute, the respondent reduced or denied payment with reason code:
   - F-Reduced according to fee guideline
   - 906-G-Unbundling: treatment/service included in another billed procedure
   - M-Reduced to fair and reasonable
   - 722-O/P treatments of 30-60 minutes in the O.R. are paid not to exceed inpatient setting and per section 413.011(b) of the Texas WC Act.
2. This dispute relates to services with reimbursement subject to the provisions of Division rule at 28 TAC §134.1(f) effective October 7, 1991, 16 TexReg 5210, which requires that "Reimbursement for services not identified in an established fee guideline shall be reimbursed at fair and reasonable rates as described in the Texas Workers' Compensation Act, sec. 8.21(b) [currently Texas Labor Code §413.011(d)], until such period that specific fee

guidelines are established by the commission.

3. Texas Labor Code §413.011(d) requires that fee guidelines must be fair and reasonable and designed to ensure the quality of medical care and to achieve effective medical cost control. The guidelines may not provide for payment of a fee in excess of the fee charged for similar treatment of an injured individual of an equivalent standard of living and paid by that individual or by someone acting on that individual's behalf. It further requires that the Division consider the increased security of payment afforded by the Act in establishing the fee guidelines.
4. Division rule at 28 TAC §133.307(g)(3)(B), effective January 2, 2002, 26 TexReg 10934, applicable to disputes filed on or after January 1, 2002, requires the requestor to send additional documentation relevant to the fee dispute including "a copy of any pertinent medical records." Review of the submitted documentation finds that the requestor has not provided copies of all medical records pertinent to the services in dispute. Although the requestor did submit a copy of the operative report, the requestor did not submit a copy of the anesthesia record, laboratory report(s), EKG report, nursing notes, post-operative/recovery record, or other pertinent medical records sufficient to support the services in dispute. The Division concludes that the requestor has not met the requirements of Division rule at 28 TAC §133.307(g)(3)(B).
5. Division rule at 28 TAC §133.307(g)(3)(D), effective January 1, 2003, 27 TexReg 12282, applicable to disputes filed on or after January 1, 2003, requires the requestor to provide "documentation that discusses, demonstrates, and justifies that the payment amount being sought is a fair and reasonable rate of reimbursement in accordance with §133.1 of this title (relating to Definitions) and §134.1 of this title (relating to Use of the Fee Guidelines)." Review of the submitted documentation finds that:
   - The requestor's position summary states that "Vista Healthcare charges the above-referenced services at a fair and reasonable rate. Specifically, these rates are based upon a comparison of charges to other Carriers and the amount of reimbursement received for these same or similar services."
   - The requestor did not provide documentation to demonstrate how it determined its usual and customary charges for the disputed services.
   - Documentation of the comparison of charges to other carriers was not presented for review.
   - Documentation of the amount of reimbursement received for these same or similar services was not presented for review.
   - The Division has previously found that "hospital charges are not a valid indicator of a hospital's costs of providing services nor of what is being paid by other payors," as stated in the adoption preamble to the Division's former *Acute Care Inpatient Hospital Fee Guideline*, 22 TexReg 6276 (July 4, 1997). It further states that "Alternative methods of reimbursement were considered… and rejected because they use hospital charges as their basis and allow the hospitals to affect their reimbursement by inflating their charges…" 22 TexReg 6268-6269. Therefore, the use of a hospital's "usual and customary" charges cannot be favorably considered when no other data or documentation was submitted to support that the payment amount being sought is a fair and reasonable reimbursement for the services in dispute.
   - In the alternative, the requestor asks to be reimbursed a minimum of 70% of billed charges, in support of which the requestor states that "The amount of reimbursement deemed to be fair and reasonable by Vista Healthcare is at a minimum of 70% of billed charges. This is supported by a managed care contract with 'Focus' that is attached as Exhibit 1."
   - The requestor's position statement further asserts that "amounts paid to healthcare providers by third party payers are relevant to determining fair and reasonable workers' compensation reimbursement. Further, the TWCC stated specifically that managed care contracts are [sic] fulfill the requirements of Texas Labor Code Section 413.011 as they are 'relevant to what fair and reasonable reimbursement is,' 'they are relevant to achieving cost control,' 'they are relevant to ensuring access to quality care,' and they are 'highly reliable.' *See* 22 TexReg 6272. Finally, managed care contracts were determined by the TWCC to be the best indication of a market price voluntarily negotiated for medical services."
   - While managed care contracts are relevant to determining a fair and reasonable reimbursement, the Division has previously found that a reimbursement methodology based upon payment of a percentage of a hospital's billed charges does not produce an acceptable payment amount. This methodology was considered and rejected by the Division in the adoption preamble to the Division's former *Acute Care Inpatient Hospital Fee Guideline*, which states at 22 Texas Register 6276 (July 4, 1997) that:

     > "A discount from billed charges was another method of reimbursement which was considered. Again, this method was found unacceptable because it leaves the ultimate reimbursement in the control of the hospital, thus defeating the statutory objective of effective cost control and the statutory standard not to pay more than for similar treatment of an injured individual of an equivalent standard of living. It also provides no incentive to contain medical costs, would be administratively burdensome for the Commission and system participants, and would require additional Commission resources."

     Therefore, a reimbursement amount that is calculated based upon a percentage of a hospital's billed charges cannot be favorably considered when no other data or documentation was submitted to support that the payment amount being sought is a fair and reasonable reimbursement for the services in dispute.
   - In support of the requested reimbursement, the requestor submitted redacted explanations of benefits, and selected

portions of EOBs, from various sample insurance carriers. However, the requestor did not discuss or explain how the sample EOBs support the requestor's position that additional payment is due. Review of the submitted documentation finds that the requestor did not establish that the sample EOBs are for services that are substantially similar to the services in dispute. The carriers' reimbursement methodologies are not described on the EOBs. Nor did the requestor explain or discuss the sample carriers' methodologies or how the payment amount was determined for each sample EOB. The requestor did not discuss whether such payment was typical for such services or for the services in dispute.

- The requestor did not submit documentation to support that payment of the amount sought is a fair and reasonable rate of reimbursement for the services in this dispute.
- The requestor did not support that payment of the requested amount would satisfy the requirements of Division rule at 28 TAC §134.1.

The request for additional reimbursement is not supported. Thorough review of the documentation submitted by the requestor finds that the requestor has not demonstrated or justified that payment of the amount sought would be a fair and reasonable rate of reimbursement for the services in dispute. Additional payment cannot be recommended.

6. The Division would like to emphasize that individual medical fee dispute outcomes rely upon the evidence presented by the requestor and respondent during dispute resolution, and the thorough review and consideration of that evidence. After thorough review and consideration of all the evidence presented by the parties to this dispute, it is determined that the submitted documentation does not support the reimbursement amount sought by the requestor. The Division concludes that this dispute was not filed in the form and manner prescribed under Division rules at 28 Texas Administrative Code §133.307(g)(3)(B) and §133.307(g)(3)(D). The Division further concludes that the requestor failed to support its position that additional reimbursement is due. As a result, the amount ordered is $0.00.

PART VI: GENERAL PAYMENT POLICIES/REFERENCES

Texas Labor Code §413.011(a-d), §413.031 and §413.0311
28 Texas Administrative Code §133.307, §134.1
Texas Government Code, Chapter 2001, Subchapter G

PART VII: DIVISION DECISION

Based upon the documentation submitted by the parties and in accordance with the provisions of Texas Labor Code §413.031, the Division has determined that the requestor is not entitled to additional reimbursement for the services involved in this dispute.

DECISION:

	Margaret Q. Ojeda	March 21, 2011
Authorized Signature	Medical Fee Dispute Resolution Officer	Date

PART VIII: YOUR RIGHT TO REQUEST AN APPEAL

Either party to this medical fee dispute has a right to request an appeal. A request for hearing must be in writing and it must be received by the DWC Chief Clerk of Proceedings within **20** (twenty) days of your receipt of this decision. A request for hearing should be sent to: Chief Clerk of Proceedings, Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers Compensation, P.O. Box 17787, Austin, Texas, 78744. **Please include a copy of the Medical Fee Dispute Resolution Findings and Decision** together with other required information specified in Division rule at 28 TAC §148.3(c).

Under Texas Labor Code §413.0311, your appeal will be handled by a Division hearing under Title 28 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 142 Rules if the total amount sought does not exceed $2,000. If the total amount sought exceeds $2,000, a hearing will be conducted by the State Office of Administrative Hearings under Texas Labor Code §413.031.

Si prefiere hablar con una persona en español acerca de ésta correspondencia, favor de llamar a 512-804-4812.