

**THIS DECISION HAS BEEN APPEALED. THE
FOLLOWING IS THE RELATED SOAH DECISION NUMBER:**

SOAH DOCKET NO. 453-03-2262.M5

MDR Tracking Number: M5-02-2529-01

Under the provisions of Section 413.031 of the Texas Workers' Compensation Act, Title 5, Subtitle A of the Texas Labor Code, effective January 1, 2002 and Commission Rule 133.305 and 133.308 titled Medical Dispute Resolution by Independent Review Organizations, the Medical Review Division assigned an IRO to conduct a review of the disputed medical necessity issues between the requestor and the respondent.

The requestor did not prevail on the medical necessity issue in regards to the lumbar MRI.

The Medical Review Division has reviewed the IRO decision and determined that **the requestor prevailed** on the issues of medical necessity. Therefore, upon receipt of this Order and in accordance with §133.308(q)(9), the Commission hereby orders the respondent and non-prevailing party to **refund the requestor \$650.00** for the paid IRO fee. For the purposes of determining compliance with the order, the Commission will add 20 days to the date the order was deemed received as outlined on page one of this order.

In accordance with §413.031(e), it is a defense for the carrier if the carrier timely complies with the IRO decision.

Based on review of the disputed issues within the request, the Medical Review Division has determined that **medical necessity was the only issue** to be resolved. The Cervical - MRI was found to be medically necessary. The respondent raised no other reasons for denying reimbursement for this Cervical - MRI charges.

On this basis, and pursuant to §§402.042, 413.016, 413.031, and 413.019 of the Act, the Medical Review Division hereby **ORDERS** the respondent to pay the unpaid medical fees in accordance with the fair and reasonable rate as set forth in Commission Rule 133.1(a)(8) plus all accrued interest due at the time of payment to the requestor within 20 days of receipt of this order. This Order is applicable to date of service 8/24/01 in this dispute.

The respondent is prohibited from asserting additional denial reasons relative to this Decision upon issuing payment to the requestor in accordance with this Order (Rule 133.307(j)(2)).

This Order is hereby issued this 7th day of January 2003.

Carol R. Lawrence
Medical Dispute Resolution Officer
Medical Review Division

CRL/crl

IRO Certificate #4599

NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW DECISION

October 23, 2002

Re: IRO Case # M5-02-2529-01

Texas Worker's Compensation Commission:

___ has been certified as an independent review organization (IRO) and has been authorized to perform independent reviews of medical necessity for the Texas Worker's Compensation Commission (TWCC). Texas HB. 2600, Rule133.308 effective January 1, 2002, allows a claimant or provider who has received an adverse medical necessity determination from a carrier's internal process, to request an independent review by an IRO.

In accordance with the requirement that TWCC assign cases to certified IRO's, TWCC assigned this case to ___ for an independent review. ___ has performed an independent review of the proposed care to determine if the adverse determination was appropriate. For that purpose, ___ received relevant medical records, any documents obtained from parties in making the adverse determination, and any other documents and/or written information submitted in support of the appeal.

The case was reviewed by a physician who is Board Certified in Neurological Surgery. He or she has signed a certification statement attesting that no known conflicts of interest exist between him or her and any of the treating physicians or providers, or any of the physicians or providers who reviewed the case for a determination prior to referral to ___ for independent review. In addition, the certification statement further attests that the review was performed without bias for or against the carrier, medical provider, or any other party to this case.

The ___ reviewer who reviewed this case, based on the medical records provided for review, has determined the following:

History

The patient was in a motor vehicle accident on ___ and experienced what is described as “whiplash” associated with neck pain and some low back and thoracic region pain. The primary pain is in the neck associated with left shoulder pain along with paresthesia and numbness into the left upper extremity.

Requested Service(s)

MRI Cervical Spine, MRI Lumbar Spine

Decision

I disagree with the carrier’s decision to deny the requested MRI of the cervical spine.

I agree with the carrier’s decision to deny the requested MRI of the lumbar spine.

Rationale

The patient was having significant neck pain and the plain x-rays of the cervical spine suggested a narrow disk along with other possible pathology, which could more properly be evaluated by MRI. Also, the left upper extremity pain with numbness and paresthesia was suggestive of nerve root compression.

Regarding the lumbar spine, there was never any neurologic deficit, straight leg raising was negative, and the plain x-rays did not show anything that would suggest that an MRI would be more revealing of pathology.

This medical necessity decision by an Independent Review Organization is deemed to be a Commission decision and order.

YOUR RIGHT TO REQUEST A HEARING

Either party to this medical dispute may disagree with all or part of the decision and has a right to request a hearing. A request for a hearing must be in writing, and it must be received by the TWCC Chief Clerk of Proceedings within **20** (twenty) days of your receipt of this decision (28 Tex. Admin. Code 148.3). This decision is deemed received by you 5 (five) days after it was mailed (28 Tex. Admin. Code 102.4(h) or 102.5(d)). A request for a hearing should be sent to: Chief Clerk of Proceedings, Texas Worker’s Compensation Commission, P O Box 40669, Austin, TX 78704-0012. A copy of this decision should be attached to the request.

The party appealing this decision shall deliver a copy of its written request for a hearing to all other parties involved in the dispute.

Sincerely,