

March 17, 2003

David Martinez
TWCC Medical Dispute Resolution
4000 IH 35 South, MS 48
Austin, TX 78704

MDR Tracking #: M2-03-0692-01
IRO #: 5251

___ has been certified by the Texas Department of Insurance as an Independent Review Organization. The Texas Worker's Compensation Commission has assigned this case to ___ for independent review in accordance with TWCC Rule 133.308 which allows for medical dispute resolution by an IRO.

___ has performed an independent review of the proposed care to determine if the adverse determination was appropriate. In performing this review, all relevant medical records and documentation utilized to make the adverse determination, along with any documentation and written information submitted, was reviewed.

The independent review was performed by a matched peer with the treating doctor. This case was reviewed by a licensed Medical Doctor with a specialty and board certification in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. The ___ health care professional has signed a certification statement stating that no known conflicts of interest exist between the reviewer and any of the treating doctors or providers or any of the doctors or providers who reviewed the case for a determination prior to the referral to ___ for independent review. In addition, the reviewer has certified that the review was performed without bias for or against any party to the dispute.

CLINICAL HISTORY

On ___, ___ sustained a work-related injury and developed chronic low back pain and bilateral lower extremity pain. He has had failed back surgery and is currently managed with analgesic medication. He was prescribed a BMR2000 neuromuscular electrical stimulator in October 2002 and used it for at least 45 days. There was a reported decrease of back pain from level 9 to level 5. An attempt was being made to reduce his use of narcotic analgesics.

REQUESTED SERVICE

The purchase of a neuromuscular stimulator is requested for this patient.

DECISION

The reviewer agrees with the prior adverse determination.

BASIS FOR THE DECISION

The treating doctor is using the neuromuscular electrical stimulator (NMES) a particularly effective modality for the treatment of chronic low back pain in randomized trials (1). The supporting documentation for this device is an abstract of one randomized study that

demonstrated that NMES was more effective than placebo but not more effective than TENS (2). The abstract's conclusion asserted that further research into the effectiveness of NMES was warranted. At best, NMES should be considered an unproven, experimental treatment for chronic low back pain. The long-term use of NMES for this patient's chronic low back pain appears not medically necessary.

___ has performed an independent review solely to determine the medical necessity of the health services that are the subject of the review. ___ has made no determinations regarding benefits available under the injured employee's policy.

As an officer of ___, I certify that there is no known conflict between the reviewer, ___ and/or any officer/employee of the IRO with any person or entity that is a party to the dispute.

___ is forwarding by mail and, in the case of time sensitive matters by facsimile, a copy of this finding to the treating doctor, payor and/or URA, patient and the TWCC.

Sincerely,

- (1) Brosseau L, et al. Efficacy of the transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation for the treatment of chronic low back pain: a meta-analysis. Spine 2002;27(6):596-603.
- (2) Moore SR, Shurman J. Combined neuromuscular electrical stimulation and transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation for treatment of chronic back pain: a double-blind, repeated measures comparison. Arch Phys Med Rehabil 1997; 78(1):55-60.

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.

In the case of prospective *spinal surgery* decision, a request for a hearing must be made in writing and it must be received by the TWCC Chief Clerk of Proceedings within 10 days of your receipt of this decision. (20 Tex. Admin. Code 142.5(c)).

In the case of other *prospective (preauthorization) medical necessity* disputes 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, per TWCC rule 133.308(t)(2).

I hereby certify, in accordance with TWCC Rule 102.4 (h), that a copy of this Independent Review Organization decision was sent to the carrier, requestor, claimant (and/or the claimant's representative) and the TWCC via facsimile, U.S. Postal Service or both on this 17th day of March 2003.