

May 19, 2003

NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW DECISION

RE: MDR Tracking #: M2-03-0770-01

___ has been certified by the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) as an independent review organization (IRO). ___ IRO Certificate Number is 5348. Texas Worker's Compensation Commission (TWCC) Rule §133.308 allows for a claimant or provider to request an independent review of a Carrier's adverse medical necessity determination. TWCC assigned the above-reference case to ___ for independent review in accordance with this Rule.

___ has performed an independent review of the proposed care to determine whether or not the adverse determination was appropriate. Relevant medical records, documentation provided by the parties referenced above and other documentation and written information submitted regarding this appeal was reviewed during the performance of this independent review.

This case was reviewed by a practicing physician on the ___ external review panel. This physician is a board certified neurosurgeon. The ___ physician reviewer signed a statement certifying that no known conflicts of interest exist between this physician and any of the treating physicians or providers or any of the physicians or providers who reviewed this case for a determination prior to the referral to ___ for independent review. In addition, the ___ physician reviewer certified that the review was performed without bias for or against any party in this case.

Clinical History

This case concerns a 44 year-old male who sustained a work related injury on ___. The patient reported that while at work he fell from a pole about 12 feet to the ground landing on his buttocks. The patient reported experiencing immediate onset of low back pain. An MRI on 10/31/02 showed herniated disc at the L4-5 level with rotation of the L5 nerve root and X-Rays from 10/22/02 were negative. The patient was treated with moist heat, ultrasound, interferential current, and an exercise program, physical therapy and epidural steroid injections.

Requested Services

Epidural Steroid Injections.

Decision

The Carrier's denial of authorization for the requested services is upheld.

Rationale/Basis for Decision

The ___ physician reviewer noted that this case concerns a 44 year-old male who sustained a work related injury to his low back on ___. The ___ physician reviewer also noted that the patient underwent an MRI that showed herniated disc at L4-5 level with rotation of the L5 nerve root. The ___ physician reviewer further noted that the patient has been treated with moist heat, ultrasound, interferential current, and an exercise program, physical therapy and epidural steroid injections. The ___ physician reviewer explained that there is no clear documentation of radiculopathy, which would be amenable to epidural steroid injections. The ___ physician reviewer also explained that the documentation indicated this patient had failed previous epidural steroid injections.

Therefore, the ___ physician consultant concluded that the requested epidural steroid injections are not medically necessary to treat this patient's condition at this time.

This decision is deemed to be a TWCC 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.

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

If disputing other prospective medical necessity (preauthorization) decisions 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 Workers' Compensation Commission
P.O. Box 40669
Austin, TX 78704-0012

A copy of this decision should be attached to the request.

The party appealing the decision shall deliver a copy of its written request for a hearing to all other parties involved in the dispute. (Commission Rule 133.308(t)(2)).

Sincerely,

I hereby verify that a copy of this Independent Review Organization (IRO) Decision was sent to the carrier, the requestor and claimant via facsimile or U.S. Postal Service from the office of the IRO on this 19th day of May 2003.