

May 13, 2003

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

MDR Tracking #: M2-03-0917-01
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

___ is a 45-year-old woman who injured her low back on ___. A lumbar MRI from 9/13/02 revealed L3/4 disc bulging, more to the right affecting the right nerve root. She was followed by ___. A consultation was made with ___, who recommended epidural steroid injections and placed her on Oxycontin 20 mgs. She underwent ESIs of the lumbar facet injections and had a lumbar discogram. She continued to have symptoms and ___ recommended lumbar transforaminal nerve blocks and three sacroiliac joint injections. ___ response to the injections was less than satisfactory. From the records, she was scheduled in January for two lumbar radiofrequency facet neurotomies. In addition to the injections, he requested an LSO back brace to stabilize the back and allow her to gain maximum benefit from the injections. ___ opined in a peer review that the requirement for a rigid custom-fitted brace was not medically indicated at this time. The carrier denied coverage and the treating doctor is appealing that denial.

REQUESTED SERVICE

The purchase of an LSO Back Brace is requested for this patient.

DECISION

The reviewer agrees with the prior adverse determination.

BASIS FOR THE DECISION

The use of braces is controversial in many circumstances in treating back injuries. However, in this case, to have a rigid or custom-fitted back brace that is proposed to be for stability of the back is not indicated. The reviewer agrees with ___ that this kind of back brace in this particular circumstance is not medically indicated.

___ 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,

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 13th day of May 2003.