

November 24, 2003

NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW DECISION

RE: MDR Tracking #: M2-03-1596-01

___ has been certified by the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) as an independent review organization (IRO). The ___ 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. The reviewer has met the requirements for the ADL of TWCC or has been approved as an exception to the ADL requirement. This physician is board certified in orthopedic surgery. 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 59 year-old male who sustained a work related injury on ___. The patient is status post arthroscopic lateral meniscectomy performed on 6/16/97. X-Rays of the left knee from 7/26/01 showed increased spurring under the patello-femoral region as well as spurring of the femoral condyle. The patient underwent an MRI on 8/23/02 that indicated arthritic changes in his left knee. The current diagnoses for this patient has included chondromalacia patella, patello-femoral chondromalacia and chronic traumatic arthritis of the left knee. Current treatment for this patient has included oral pain medications.

Requested Services

Left total knee arthroplasty.

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 59 year-old male who sustained a work related injury to his left knee on ____. The ___ physician reviewer indicated that the patient has undergone a lateral meniscectomy and recent radiographs show increased spurring of the patellofemoral joint and spurring on the lateral femoral condyle. The ___ physician reviewer explained that although a progress note dated 6/3/03 indicates that patient is having pain in the left knee, the note does not describe the type of pain nor does it describe the state of any aspects of the patient's physical findings. The ___ physician reviewer also explained that the documentation provided does not show that the patient has tried and failed other treatment modalities such as steroid injections, viscoelastic injections, physical therapy or activity modifications. The ___ physician reviewer further explained that the documentation provided did not contain any current radiographs indicating findings consistent with moderate to moderately severe arthrosis. Therefore, the ___ physician consultant concluded that the requested left total knee arthroplasty is 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/Appeals Clerk
P.O. Box 17787
Austin, TX 78744
Fax: 512-804-4011

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 21st day of November 2003.