

NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW DECISION

September 23, 2003

RE: MDR Tracking #: M2-03-1634-01
IRO Certificate #: IRO4326

___ has been certified by the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) as an independent review organization (IRO). The Texas Workers' Compensation Commission (TWCC) has assigned the above referenced 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, relevant medical records, any documents utilized by the parties referenced above in making the adverse determination, and any documentation and written information submitted in support of the appeal was reviewed.

The independent review was performed by a ___ physician reviewer who is board certified in neurosurgery which is the same specialty as the treating physician. The ___ physician reviewer has signed a certification statement stating 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 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 this case.

Clinical History

This patient injured her back while carrying a 25 pound bag of flour on ___. The patient had x-rays and was started on medications as well as physical therapy. An MRI dated 11/22/02 revealed a moderate spondylosis at L4-5 and a CT discogram from 02/02/03 showed a disc herniation at L4-5. A designated doctor examination (DDE) determined her to be at maximum medical improvement (MMI) on 06/17/03 and she was given an impairment rating of 14%.

Requested Service(s)

Lumbar epidural steroid injection #2 and bilateral transforaminal epidural blocks

Decision

It is determined that the proposed lumbar epidural steroid injection #2 and bilateral transforaminal epidural blocks are medically necessary to treat this patient's condition.

Rationale/Basis for Decision

The request for an additional epidural steroid injection (ESI) is reasonable under the clinical circumstances outlined in the record. In the documentation in which the patient was determined to be at MMI, the evaluating physician states that "the patient is considering

pain management". He then states that "if the patient fails conservative treatment with pain management...." This indicates that the patient shouldn't be considered at MMI and further treatment is appropriate. In addition, the current standard for ESIs is to administer a series of three to receive full benefit from the medication. Therefore, it is determined that the proposed lumbar epidural steroid injection #2 and bilateral transforaminal epidural blocks are medically necessary.

This decision by the IRO 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) calendar days of your receipt of this decision (28 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) calendar days of your receipt of this decision (28 Tex. Admin. Code 142.5(c)).

This decision is deemed received by you 5 (five) days after it was mailed or the date of fax (28 Tex. Admin. Code 102.5(d)). A request for hearing and a **copy of this decision** must be sent to: Chief Clerk of Proceedings/Appeals Clerk, Texas Workers' Compensation Commission, P.O. Box 17787, Austin, Texas, 78744, Fax: 512-804-4011.

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

Sincerely,

<p>In accordance with Commission Rule 102.4 (h), 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 23rd day of September 2003.</p>
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