

NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW DECISION

Date: October 20, 2003

RE: MDR Tracking #: M2-03-1771-01
IRO Certificate #: 5242

___ 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 an Orthopedic Surgeon physician reviewer who is board certified in Orthopedic Surgery, who has ADL certification. The Orthopedic Surgeon 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

The claimant has a history of chronic back pain and left leg pain allegedly related to a work injury on ___.

Requested Service(s)

Outpatient IDET procedure

Decision

I agree with the insurance carrier that the requested intervention is not medically necessary.

Rationale/Basis for Decision

Generally discography is a controversial test that can demonstrate anatomic abnormality in asymptomatic people and subjective response can be widely skewed particularly with psychological issues. Discography is not a primary diagnostic tool, but a confirmatory study in the presence of an established diagnosis of a significant disc condition when spinal fusion is anticipated. IDET is an invasive, ablative heat generated procedure with similar indications as fusion. Upon review of all clinical documentation provided, there is no evidence to indicate there is a significant disc condition necessitating IDET or spinal fusion. An MRI report of 8/25/02 indicates only mild disc bulging at L5/S1 and L4/5, and mild degenerative disc changes. There is no documentation of instability by flexion/extension views or severe degenerative changes at any motion segment level to indicate the need for IDET or spinal fusion. Furthermore, a discography report dated 6/10/03 indicates reproduction of back pain without leg pain. The pain reproduced at discogram is not concordant. There is no documentation of exhaustion of conservative measures including but not limited to bracing and spinal stabilization techniques (McKenzie program). I strongly recommend continued conservative management and continued clinical work up in this clinical setting.

YOUR RIGHT TO REQUEST A HEARING

Either party to 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 a hearing and a **copy of this decision** must be sent to:

Chief Clerk of Proceedings / Appeals Clerk
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 other party involved in this dispute.