

IRO Certificate #4599

NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW DECISION

March 30, 2004

Re: IRO Case # M2-04-0902

Texas Worker's Compensation Commission:

___ has been certified as an independent review organization (IRO) and has been authorized to perform independent reviews of medical necessity for the Texas Worker's Compensation Commission (TWCC). Texas HB. 2600, Rule 133.308 effective January 1, 2002, allows a claimant or provider who has received an adverse medical necessity determination from a carrier's internal process, to request an independent review by an IRO.

In accordance with the requirement that TWCC assign cases to certified IROs, TWCC assigned this case to ___ for an independent review. ___ has performed an independent review of the proposed care to determine if the adverse determination was appropriate. For that purpose, ___ received relevant medical records, any documents obtained from parties in making the adverse determination, and any other documents and/or written information submitted in support of the appeal.

The case was reviewed by a physician who is Board Certified in Neurological Surgery, and who has met the requirements for the TWCC Approved Doctor List or who has been granted an exception from the ADL. He or she has signed a certification statement attesting 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 referral to ___ for independent review. In addition, the certification statement further attests that the review was performed without bias for or against the carrier, medical provider, or any other party to this case.

The determination of the ___ reviewer who reviewed this case, based on the medical records provided, is as follows:

History

The patient is a 58-year-old obese, diabetic, female who was injured in ___ when she slipped and fell, causing back, lower extremity and right shoulder pain. An MRI suggested an L4-5 disk rupture as the cause of her discomfort, and in November 1996 a hemilaminectomy was performed at the L4-5 and L5-S1 levels with disk removal from the right side at L4-5. The patient did reasonable well post operatively, and she was able to return to work as a telephone operator for about six months; then her back pain became so severe that she was unable to work.

Despite medications and epidural steroid injections, the patient has continued to have major discomfort that interferes with her ability to work.

On 12/2/03 a CT myelogram showed expected changes considering her long course of trouble, but there was no major nerve pressure or any changes associated with instability. An MRI on 11/21/03 had shown essentially the same thing.

Requested Service(s)

Lumbar laminectomy with fusion and instrumentation

Decision

I agree with the carrier's decision to deny the proposed surgery.

Rationale

Neither the MRI nor the CT myelogram confirm disk difficulties to the point that pressure is present on the nerves or that it is causing instability. It is unfortunate that flexion and extension views were not obtained during the myelographic evaluation. The patient's obesity and diabetes are other factors that would add to the possibility of the proposed procedure not being successful in treating the patient's problem.

This medical necessity decision by an Independent Review Organization is deemed to be a Commission decision and order.

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.

Sincerely,

In accordance with Commission Rule 102.4 (b), I hereby certify that a copy of this Independent Review Organization (IRO) decision was sent to the carrier and the requestor or claimant via facsimile or US Postal Service from the office of the IRO on this 31st day of March 2004.