

NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW DETERMINATION

MDR Tracking Number: M2-04-1407-01
IRO Certificate Number: 5259

July 9, 2004

An independent review of the above-referenced case has been completed by a neurosurgeon medical physician. The appropriateness of setting and medical necessity of proposed or rendered services is determined by the application of medical screening criteria published by Texas Medical Foundation, or by the application of medical screening criteria and protocols formally established by practicing physicians. All available clinical information, the medical necessity guidelines and the special circumstances of said case was considered in making the determination.

The independent review determination and reasons for the determination, including the clinical basis for the determination, is as follows:

See Attached Physician Determination

___ hereby certifies that the reviewing physician is on Texas Workers' Compensation Commission Approved Doctor List (ADL). Additionally, said physician has certified that no known conflicts of interest exist between him and any of the treating physicians or providers or any of the physicians or providers who reviewed the case for determination prior to referral to ___.

Sincerely,

CLINICAL HISTORY

The patient is a 51-year-old male who was injured while lifting on the job back in ___ that, since that time, has had back pain radiating into the lower extremities. He has undergone extensive conservative treatment consisting largely of epidural steroid injections with temporary relief. The last MRI 2/2003 apparently shows a large L5-S1 disc herniation with a smaller herniation at L4-5. The recommendation for nucleoplasty has been made.

REQUESTED SERVICE(S)

Nucleoplasty L5-S1.

DECISION

Approved.

RATIONALE/BASIS FOR DECISION

Although there are no clinical controlled studies to address the effectiveness of disc nucleoplasty, there are a variety of clinical studies that suggest nucleoplasty is effective for the treatment of leg pain and certain patients with back pain. Initial outcome studies have shown high success rates in pain reduction and even higher success rates in patient satisfaction. In addition, nucleoplasty is not thought to reduce the efficacy of any subsequent procedures such as open surgery.

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 (20 Tex. Admin. Code 142.5©).

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 148.3).

This decision is deemed received by you 5 (five) days after it was mailed or the date of fax (28 Tex. Admin. Code 102.4(h) or 102.5(d)). A request for a 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

Or fax the request to (512) 804-4011. A copy of this decision must be attached to the request.

The party appealing the decision shall deliver a copy of its written request for a hearing to the opposing party involved in the dispute.

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 13th day of July, 2004.