

July 22, 2004

NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW DECISION

MDR Tracking #: M2-04-1506-01

___ 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 neurosurgery and is familiar with the condition and treatment options at issue in this appeal. 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 male who sustained a work related injury on ____. The patient reported that while at work he fell from a ladder sustaining multiple contusions to the left side of his body and elbow. An MRI performed on 9/3/03 was reported to have shown a posterior central disc protrusion, annulus tear with paracentral disc bulge, mild spinal stenosis L4-L5 and posterior disc bulge extending laterally L3-L4. An EMG performed on 10/9/03 indicated bilateral L5 radiculitis and a right S1 radiculitis. The diagnoses for this patient have included L5 radiculopathy and herniated disc. The patient has been recommended for a bilateral decompressive laminectomy/discectomy L4-5 with PLIF, internal fixation with Brantigan cages, instrumentation with screws/rods, and bone graft.

Requested Services

3-day inpatient stay at the Spine Hospital for bilateral decompressive laminectomy/discectomy L4-5 with PLIF, internal fixation with Brantigan cages, instrumentation with screws/rods, and bone graft

Documents and/or information used by the reviewer to reach a decision:

Documents Submitted by Requestor:

1. No documents submitted

Documents Submitted by Respondent:

1. PRE Certification Request 4/29/04
2. Case Summary 7/1/04
3. Office notes 1/6/04 – 4/13/04
4. Follow up exam 1/5/04 – 4/12/04
5. EMG 10/9/03

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 male who sustained a work related injury on ___. The ___ physician reviewer also noted that the diagnoses for this patient have included L5 radiculopathy and herniated disc. The ___ physician reviewer further noted that the patient has been recommended for back surgery for further treatment of his condition. The ___ physician reviewer explained that there is no clearly defined indication for the proposed surgery. The ___ physician reviewer indicated that the patient has been diagnosed with disc degeneration but that there is no compression pathology. The ___ physician reviewer explained that there is no evidence of neural impingement or instability. The ___ physician reviewer also explained that the patient has subjective complaints only. The ___ physician reviewer further explained that there is no evidence of medical necessity for the requested surgery. Therefore, the ___ physician consultant concluded that the requested 3 day inpatient stay at the Spine Hospital for bilateral decompressive laminectomy/discectomy L4-5 with PLIF, internal fixation with Brantigan cages, instrumentation with screws/rods, and bone graft 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 22nd day of July 2004.