

Envoy Medical Systems, LP
1726 Cricket Hollow
Austin, Texas 78758
Fax 512/491-5145

IRO Certificate #4599

NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW DECISION

April 5, 2005

Re: IRO Case # M2-05-1063 –01

Texas Worker's Compensation Commission:

Envoy Medical Systems, LP (Envoy) 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 Envoy for an independent review. Envoy has performed an independent review of the proposed care to determine if the adverse determination was appropriate. For that purpose, Envoy 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 Envoy 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 Envoy reviewer who reviewed this case, based on the medical records provided, is as follows:

Medical Information Reviewed

1. Table of disputed services
2. Denial letters
3. Report 2/21/05 Dr. Armstrong
4. RME 12/30/04 Dr. Donavan

5. Letter 1/19/05, chart notes 2004, 2005 Dr. Rosenstein
6. MRI lumbar and thoracic spine reports 2/25/05
7. CT scan lumbar spine report 4/12/04
8. Medical consultation report 1/25/04 Dr. Galbraith
9. Chiropractic records

History

The patient is a 44-year-old male who was injured in ___ when someone fell on him, causing him to bend backwards. The patient developed pain in his low back. The patient was given chiropractic treatment, medications, and physical therapy without help. Thoracic pain has developed since the onset of low back pain. MRI evaluation of the lumbar and thoracic spine has shown chronic changes without any surgically significant problems. Lumbar epidural steroid injections have not been significantly helpful. An April 2004 lumbar facet injection helped enough for the patient to continue working. Subsequent facet injections have not been helpful. The patient's problem as of Dr. Rosenstein's note of 2/28/05 was primarily low back and leg pain, and the surgeon suggested discographic evaluation in anticipation of possible surgery.

Requested Service(s)

Thoracic ESI

Decision

I agree with the carrier's decision to deny the requested ESI.

Rationale

As is indicated by the surgeon proposing these injections, the patient's difficulty now is primarily low back trouble, and he is thinking in terms of discographic evaluation in the lumbar spine followed by possible surgery. Under these circumstances, to pursue thoracic epidural steroid injections would not only be unusual, but would be contra indicated, considering they would not be directed at the patient's primary pain 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,

Daniel Y. Chin, for GP

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 5th day of April 2005.

Signature of IRO Representative:

Printed Name of IRO Representative: Alice McCutcheon

Requestor: Dr. J. Rosenstein, Attn Cheryl, Fx 817-465-2775

Respondent: American Home Assurance Co., Attn Katie Foster, Fx 867-1733

Texas Workers Compensation Commission Fx 804-4871 Attn: