

April 15, 2005

VIA FACSIMILE
Texas Mutual Ins.
Attn: Ron Nesbitt

NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW DECISION

RE: MDR Tracking #: M2-05-1209-01
TWCC #:
Injured Employee:
Requestor:
Respondent: Texas Mutual Co.
MAXIMUS Case #: TW05-0062

MAXIMUS has been certified by the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) as an independent review organization (IRO). The MAXIMUS 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 MAXIMUS for independent review in accordance with this Rule.

MAXIMUS 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 MAXIMUS 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 MAXIMUS 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 MAXIMUS for independent review. In addition, the MAXIMUS physician reviewer certified that the review was performed without bias for or against any party in this case.

Clinical History

This case concerns a female who sustained a work related injury on _____. The patient reported that while at work she injured her mid thoracic region when she attempted to lift a box weighing about 80lbs. The patient was initially treated with physical therapy and subsequently underwent an MRI that reportedly revealed a T10-11 left lateral disc herniation measuring 5cm and a T11-12 slight central posterior disc herniation measuring 3.5mm, bulging disca at C4-5 and C5-6, and a minimal bulging disc at C6-7. An EMG/NCV performed on 2/24/05 revealed potential evidence of a right C6 radiculopathy. The diagnoses for this patient have included cervical facet arthropathy, cervical radiculopathy vs. ulnar nerve entrapment, and thoracic strain. The patient has been recommended for a thoracic facet block right for further treatment of her condition.

Requested Services

Thoracic facet block right.

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

Documents Submitted by Requestor:

1. Initial Examination 1/25/05
2. EMG/NCV report 2/24/05
3. Follow Up Notes 2/8/05 – 3/8/05
4. Treatment Note 12/24/04

Documents Submitted by Respondent:

1. Review of Medical History and Physical Exam 1/25/05
2. Same Records as above

Decision

The Carrier's denial of authorization for the requested services is upheld.

Rationale/Basis for Decision

The MAXIMUS physician reviewer noted that this case concerns a female who sustained a work related injury to her mid thoracic region on _____. The MAXIMUS physician reviewer also noted that the diagnoses for this patient have included cervical facet arthropathy, cervical radiculopathy vs. ulnar nerve entrapment, and thoracic strain. The MAXIMUS physician reviewer further noted that the treatment for this patient's condition has included physical therapy and that the patient has been recommended for a thoracic block right for further treatment of this patient's condition. The MAXIMUS physician reviewer explained that there is no clinical evidence indicating the site for the requested facet blocks. The MAXIMUS physician reviewer indicated that the patient's thoracic spine is normal on examination. The MAXIMUS physician reviewer explained that the efficacy of facet blocks as a therapeutic modality has not been proven. Therefore, the MAXIMUS physician consultant concluded that the requested thoracic facet block right 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,
MAXIMUS

Elizabeth McDonald
State Appeals Department

cc: Texas Workers Compensation Commission

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 15th day of April 2005.

Signature of IRO Employee: _____
External Appeals Department