

NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW DECISION

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December 13, 2005

Requestor

Humberto Tijerina, MD
ATTN: Art Campos
1200 S. 2nd St., Ste 5-A
McAllen, TX 78503

Respondent

Downs & Stanford PC
ATTN: Jon Grove
2001 Bryan St., Ste 4000
Dallas, TX 75201

RE: Claim #: _____
Injured Worker: _____
MDR Tracking #: M2-06-0254-01
IRO Certificate #: IRO4326

TMF Health Quality Institute (TMF) has been certified by the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) as an independent review organization (IRO). The Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) has assigned the above referenced case to TMF for independent review in accordance with DWC Rule §133.308 which allows for medical dispute resolution by an IRO.

TMF has performed an independent review of the proposed care to determine if the adverse determination was appropriate. In performing this review, relevant medical records, any documents utilized by the parties referenced above in making the adverse determination, and any documentation and written information submitted in support of the appeal was reviewed.

The independent review was performed by a TMF physician reviewer who is board certified in Neurological Surgery, by the American Board of Neurological Surgery Inc., licensed by the Texas State Board of Medical Examiners (TSBME) in 1986, and who provides health care to injured workers. This is the same specialty as the treating physician. The TMF physician reviewer has signed a certification statement stating that no known conflicts of interest exist between him or her and the provider, the injured employee, the injured employee's employer, the injured employee's insurance carrier, the utilization review agent, or any of the treating doctors or insurance carrier health care providers who reviewed the case for decision before referral to the IRO. In addition, the reviewer has certified that the review was performed without bias for or against any party to this case.

Clinical History

This patient sustained a work-related injury on ___ when he was lifting some boards from the conveyor and after bending over, he had difficulty straightening up. The patient complains of low back pain and numbness in his legs with a tingling sensation from below the knees to the ankles. He has been treated with physical therapy and the treating neurosurgeon has recommended surgical intervention.

Requested Service(s)

Decompression laminectomy L3-4, L4-5, and L5-S1 with discectomy and foraminotomy with a length of stay of 3 days

Decision

It is determined that the decompression laminectomy L3-4, L4-5, and L5-S1 with discectomy and foraminotomy with a length of stay of 3 days is not medically necessary to treat this patient's condition.

Rationale/Basis for Decision

Medical record documentation indicates that the patient does have disc pathology on the Lumbar MRI report dated 03/24/2005. However, the degree of stenosis is described at "slight to moderate". In addition, despite the report of persistent lumbar symptoms, the physical capabilities described in the information provided for review, calls into question the need for an extensive three level lumbar surgery. A repeat lumbar MRI would be appropriate to assess current disc pathology.

This decision by the IRO is deemed to be a DWC decision and order.

YOUR RIGHT TO APPEAL

If you are unhappy with all or part of this decision, you have the right to appeal the decision. The decision of the Independent Review Organization is binding during the appeal process.

If you are disputing the decision (other than a spinal surgery prospective decision), the appeal must be made directly to a district court in Travis County (see Texas Labor Code § 413.031). An appeal to District Court must be filed not later than 30 days after the date on which the decision that is the subject of the appeal is final and appealable. If you are disputing a spinal surgery prospective decision, a request for a hearing must be in writing and it must be received by the Division of Workers' Compensation, Chief Clerk of Proceedings, within ten (10) days of your receipt of this decision.

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 hearing and a **copy of this decision** must be sent to: Chief Clerk of Proceedings/Appeals Clerk, Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation, P.O. Box 17787, Austin, Texas, 78744, Fax: 512-804-4011.

M2-06-0254-01
Page 3

The party appealing this decision shall deliver a copy of its written request for a hearing to all other parties involved in this dispute.

Sincerely,

Gordon B. Strom, Jr., MD
Director of Medical Assessment

GBS:dm
Attachment

cc: _____, Injured Worker
Program Administrator, Medical Review Division, DWC

In accordance with Division 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 December 2005.

Signature of IRO Employee:

Printed Name of IRO Employee: