

Envoy Medical Systems, LP
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IRO Certificate #4599

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NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW DECISION

January 16, 2006

Re: IRO Case # M2-06-0406 -01 ____

Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation:

Envoy Medical Systems, LP (Envoy) has been certified as an independent review organization (IRO) by the Texas Department of Insurance and has been authorized to perform independent reviews of medical necessity for Division of Workers' Compensation cases. 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 the Division of Workers' Compensation assign cases to certified IROs, this case was assigned 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 Division of Workers' Compensation 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 the injured employee, the injured employee's employer, the injured employee's insurance carrier, the utilization review agent, 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. Lumbar MRI reports 3/26/05, 1/6/05

4. Bone scan report 2/9/05
5. Electrodiagnostic testing report 11/4/05
6. Reports 2/05 –10/05, Dr. Dennis
7. Journal articles on discography

History

The patient is a 42-year-old male who in ___ slipped and fell on a curb, landing “almost in a sitting position.” Acute onset of severe low back pain occurred, along with upper back pain. The upper back pain soon subsided, and the low back pain was soon associated with left lower extremity pain and numbness. These discomforts have persisted despite physical therapy, epidural steroid injections and medications. On examination there is no reflex, sensory or motor deficit, and on two examinations straight leg raising is negative. EMG on 11/4/05 suggests L5 radiculopathy on the left. MRIs on 1/6/05 and 3/26/05 show severe disk disease, primarily at the L5-S1 level, with a question of infection at the L%-S! level, which has since been ruled out.

Requested Service(s)

Awake lumbar discogram and post disco CT L3-4, L4-5, L5-S1

Decision

I agree with the carrier’s decision to deny the requested discographic evaluation.

Rationale

The patient has evidence at least on EMG of radiculopathy, and discography is rarely a means of dealing with the source of such discomfort. Instead, CT myelography is often beneficial, especially if associated with flexion and extension views, because it might determine the source of radicular pain, along with the source of back pain.

This medical necessity decision by an Independent Review Organization is deemed to be a Worker’s Compensation decision and order.

YOUR RIGHT TO APPEAL

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

If you are disputing a decision other than a spinal surgery prospective decision, the appeal must be made directly to the district clerk in Travis County (see Texas Labor Code sec. 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.

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 16th day of January 2006.

Signature of IRO Representative:

Printed Name of IRO Representative: Alice McCutcheon

Requestor: ____

Respondent: TML Intergovernmental Risk Pool/Laredo Transit, Attn Katie Foster 867-1733

Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation: Fx 804-4871 Attn: