

NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW DECISION

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September 7, 2006

Requestor

Dean McMillan, MD
ATTN: Angie Velasquez
6660 Airline Dr.
Houston, TX 77076

Respondent

Houston ISD
ATTN: Robert Josey
P.O. Box 91569
Austin, TX 78709

RE: Claim #: _____
Injured Worker: _____
MDR Tracking #: M2-06-1822-01
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 Family Practice, by the American Board of Family Practice, Inc., licensed by the Texas State Board of Medical Examiners (TSBME) in 1976, 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 she injured her lower back while turning to open a door while lifting products. The patient has been treated with conservative care including physical therapy and injections.

Requested Service(s)

Transforaminal epidural steroid injection #1

Decision

It is determined that the transforaminal epidural steroid injection #1 is not medically necessary to treat this patient's condition.

Rationale/Basis for Decision

Unresolved low back pain following a mechanical injury is a common problem with little evidence-based therapy. Injections into the epidural space have been utilized but seem to be effective only in a minority of cases. Even then, there is no real evidence this was the reason for the improvement. Double blind studies are not realistic tests of this condition. The 18th edition of Cecil's Textbook of Medicine discussed how epidural injections are used in cases of bulging disks after other modalities have failed. This is still not "evidence-based" but is utilized as treatment. Since this patient has no bulging disk, there is no reasonable expectation that epidural steroid injections would help.

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.

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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 7th day of September 2006.

Signature of IRO Employee:

Printed Name of IRO Employee:

Information Submitted to TMF for Review

Patient Name: ____

Tracking #: M2-06-1822-01

Information Submitted by Requestor:

None

Information Submitted by Respondent:

- **Decision letters**
- **Review of pre-authorization for PT**
- **Review of pre-authorization for transforaminal epidural steroid injections.**
- **Designated Doctor Evaluation – Dr. Kwong**
- **Required Medical Examination – Dr. Freeman**
- **Employee Injury and Treatment Form**