

NOTICE OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW DECISION

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November 14, 2006

Requestor

Alta Vista Healthcare
ATTN: James Odom
5445 La Sierra Dr., k#204
Dallas, TX 75231

Respondent

Zurich American Ins. Co. c/o SRS
ATTN: Mona Johnston
P.O. Box 130927
Dallas, TX 75313-0927

RE: Claim #: _____
Injured Worker: _____
MDR Tracking #: M2-07-0276-01
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 Physical Medicine & Rehab, by the American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Inc., licensed by the Texas State Board of Medical Examiners (TSBME) in 1979, 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 slipped and fell on wet stairs and landed on his back. The patient has been treated with physical therapy, epidural steroid injections, surgery, and participation in a work hardening program.

Requested Service(s)

Chronic pain management program x 15 days/sessions

Decision

It is determined that the chronic pain management program x 15 days/sessions is medically necessary to treat this patient's condition.

Rationale/Basis for Decision

This patient had been in an interrupted program. The medical record documentation indicates some reduction in anxiety and reduction in medication usage. Specifically, he is off Mobic, Gabapentin and alprazolam. He has reduced his use of tramadol/Ultracet as well. This needs to be taken into consideration. He had been scheduled for a Designated Doctor Exam on September 7, 2006, but the results are not available for review. Based upon these factors, treatment for an additional 15 days (3 calendar weeks) does not appear to be unreasonable. The key point to be considered is the criteria used for measurement of the program. The reduced symptoms and ultimate employability are the key ones in addition to medication reduction. Tramadol is not a controlled substance, but shares the mu receptor agonist capabilities of opioids and still has the potential for abuse. Therefore, treatment to reduce its use, and improved function and employability are justified.

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.

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 14th day of November 2006.

Signature of IRO Employee:
Printed Name of IRO Employee:

Information Submitted to TMF for Review

Patient Name: ____

Tracking #: M2-07-0276-01

Information Submitted by Requestor:

None

Information Submitted by Respondent:

- **Determination Letter**
- **Chronic Pain Management Program Preauthorization Request**
- **Patient profile**
- **Request for 15 additional days in a chronic pain management program**
- **Pain Rehabilitation Program Design**
- **Physical Performance Evaluation**
- **History and Physical from Alta Vista**