



Texas Department of Insurance

Division of Workers' Compensation

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WORK CONDITIONING AND WORK HARDENING, ODG AND PREAUTHORIZATION PROCESS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Prior to the adoption of the Division's treatment guidelines [the Official Disability Guideline (ODG)], facilities accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) could request exemption from preauthorization for Work Conditioning and Work Hardening programs. Is this Division exemption still available for these programs?

Yes. Facilities with CARF accreditation for Work Conditioning and Work Hardening programs may still request exemption from preauthorization. Facilities granted exemption status are listed on the Division website: Work Hardening and Work Conditioning Programs Exempted from Preauthorization and Concurrent Review (see <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/dm/carf-table.html>).

2. Are there circumstances when the exempted CARF facilities are required to obtain preauthorization prior to rendering Work Conditioning and Work Hardening services?

Yes. Preauthorization is required for any service, including Work Conditioning and Work Hardening programs, when the service is not specified as "recommended" by the ODG for a specific diagnosis, or when the service exceeds the number or duration listed in the ODG.

3. When exempted CARF facilities do not obtain preauthorization prior to providing Work Conditioning or Work Hardening services within the ODG guideline criteria, can the services rendered be subject to retrospective medical necessity review by carriers?

Yes. Work conditioning and Work Hardening services provided within the ODG guideline criteria but without obtaining preauthorization are subject to retrospective utilization review for medical necessity, and reimbursement may be denied based on lack of medical necessity.

4. When exempted CARF facilities do not obtain preauthorization prior to providing Work Conditioning or Work Hardening services that are outside the ODG guideline criteria, should the services rendered be subject to retrospective medical necessity review by carriers?

No. Work Conditioning and Work Hardening services provided outside of the ODG criteria and without obtaining preauthorization should be denied by the insurance carrier as "payment denied/reduced for absence of precertification/authorization."

5. Is Work Conditioning for exempted CARF facilities the same as Physical Therapy, and should Work Conditioning be limited in number and duration to any unused Physical Therapy sessions?

No. Work Conditioning should not be confused with Physical Therapy. For Division purposes, Work Conditioning programs are General Occupational Rehabilitation Programs as defined in the CARF manual, and are designated with CPT Codes 97545 or 97546 and modifier "WC / CA" when billing.

Questions? Contact Division of Workers' Compensation staff at MedBen@tdi.texas.gov.

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