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IRO Certificate X

**Notice of Independent Review Decision**

**DATE OF REVIEW:** X

**IRO CASE NO.** X

**DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICE OR SERVICES IN DISPUTE**

X

**A DESCRIPTION OF THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR EACH PHYSICIAN OR OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDER WHO REVIEWED THE DECISION**

Physician Board Certified in X

**REVIEW OUTCOME**

Upon independent review the reviewer finds that the previous adverse determination/adverse determinations should be:

Upheld (Agree)

**Overtaken (Disagree) X**

Partially Overtaken (Agree in part/Disagree in part)

**INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE IRO FOR REVIEW**

X

**PATIENT CLINICAL HISTORY SUMMARY**

X started psychotherapy after contracting COVID-19 on X. X was later diagnosed with transverse myelitis which is believed to be triggered by the COVID-19 attacking X immune system. In X, X treating physician recommended X continue X.

X was observed to be compliant with X medications and psychotherapy sessions. After eight sessions, X score on the Beck Anxiety Inventory decreased, as did X score on the Beck Depression Inventory. Additionally, X sleep score improved, indicating a positive change in X sleep. These scores suggest that X has been responsive to the treatment, demonstrating steady progress.

One reason given for the denial was a quote stating *“Trauma-focused psychotherapy should be considered first-line treatment for active duty military personnel with PTSD.”* This overlooks X background and X lived experience of having Long COVID-19, resulting in multiple medical issues and problems in X life.

*“Researchers have long understood that people with chronic health conditions, such as heart disease, are at increased risk for depression. The same may be true for people with COVID-19 symptoms that linger for months and sometimes years.*

**PATIENT CLINICAL HISTORY SUMMARY** (continuation)

*An estimated 28% of U.S. Adults who have had acute COVID-19 infections say they have experienced Long COVID at some point, according to the latest survey data from the U.S Census Bureau. Long COVID occurs when a constellation of symptoms persist following the initial illness. It's more prevalent among people who are older, female, hospitalized and unvaccinated. Symptoms vary but may include fatigue, brain fog, dizziness, gut problems, heart palpitations, sexual problems, change in smell of taste,*

chronic cough, chest pain, muscle twitching and the worsening of symptoms after any type of physical or mental exertion.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in June issued an advisory warning that Long COVID can have **“devastating effects on the mental health of those who experience it, as well as their families”, stemming from the illness itself, social isolation, financial insecurity, caregiver burnout and grief. It has been linked to fatigue, sleep disturbances, depression, anxiety, cognitive impairment and post-traumatic stress disorder, among other conditions”**

**“Depression is the most prominent symptom we see,”** said X, a neuropsychiatrist and assistant professor in the department of psychiatry and neurology at X.

Diagnosing depression in someone with Long COVID takes a more nuanced approach than diagnosing the condition in the general population, X said. That's because symptoms often associated with depression – such as sleep disturbances, fatigue, changes in appetite and concentration – also are associated with Long COVID.

Dr. X, said **rates of depression and anxiety in people with Long COVID appear to be higher than in the general population, just as they are among people with other chronic illnesses.”**  
**(<https://www.heart.org/en/news/2023/08/17/understanding-the-link-between-long-covid-and-mental-health-conditions>)**

By measures both subjective and objective, X has benefitted from X psychotherapy. X treatment team agrees.

#### **ANALYSIS AND EXPLANATION OF THE DECISION INCLUDE CLINICAL BASIS, FINDINGS, AND CONCLUSIONS USED TO SUPPORT THE DECISION**

**Opinion:** I disagree with the benefit company's decision to deny the requested service.

**Rationale:** X has been diagnosed with Long COVID-19, a condition that can be debilitating and which has been shown to be responsible for both physical and emotional disturbances. X has been addressing X problems with his medical doctor and with a therapist. X has made progress.

*“A new UCLA-led study suggests that some people living with Long COVID may be able to alleviate certain symptoms by using short-term, self-regulating therapies.*

*The small-scale study, published in the [Journal of Psychosomatic Research](https://www.uclahealth.org/news/release/long-covid-patients-report-improvements-following-self), recruited a group of 20 Long COVID patients, many of whom had been experiencing symptoms for more than a year. Each participant underwent six sessions of biofeedback therapy, which involves the practice of breathwork and relaxation techniques paired with visual feedback to teach self-regulation of autonomic functions such as heart rate and temperature.”* (**<https://www.uclahealth.org/news/release/long-covid-patients-report-improvements-following-self>**).

**It is unlikely that X can learn this on X own and will need assistance. The requested service: X, is essential to X continuing progress and is medically necessary.**

#### **DESCRIPTION AND SOURCE OF THE SCREENING CRITERIA OR OTHER CLINICAL BASIS USED TO MAKE THE DECISION**

ACOEM-AMERICAN COLLEGE OF OCCUPATIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL  
MEDICINE UM KNOWLEDGE BASE

AHCPR-AGENCY FOR HEALTH CARE RESEARCH & QUALITY GUIDELINES

DWC-DIVISION OF WORKERS COMPENSATION POLICIES OR GUIDELINES

EUROPEAN GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC LOW BACK PAIN

INTERQUAL CRITERIA

**MEDICAL JUDGEMENT, CLINICAL EXPERIENCE & EXPERTISE IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACCEPTED MEDICAL STANDARDS X**

MERCY CENTER CONSENSUS CONFERENCE GUIDELINES

MILLIMAN CARE GUIDELINES

ODG-OFFICIAL DISABILITY GUIDELINES & TREATMENT GUIDELINES

PRESSLEY REED, THE MEDICAL DISABILITY ADVISOR

TEXAS GUIDELINES FOR CHIROPRACTIC QUALITY ASSURANCE & PRACTICE PARAMETERS

TMF SCREENING CRITERIA MANUAL

**PEER REVIEWED NATIONALLY ACCEPTED MEDICAL LITERATURE X**  
(PROVIDE DESCRIPTION)

**(<https://www.heart.org/en/news/2023/08/17/understanding-the-link-between-long-covid-and-mental-health-conditions>)**

**(<https://www.uclahealth.org/news/release/long-covid-patients-report-improvements-following-self>)**

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: "...addressing long term potential effects of COVID-19 laying groundwork for later guidance..." June, 2020**

**U.S Census Bureau: "Guidance on Long Covid as Disability under the ADA, Section 504, and Section 1557" June 26, 2021**

OTHER EVIDENCE BASED, SCIENTIFICALLY VALID, OUTCOME FOCUSED GUIDELINES  
(PROVIDE DESCRIPTION)