



## **Texas Department of Insurance**

### **Division of Workers' Compensation**

Medical Fee Dispute Resolution, MS-48

7551 Metro Center Drive, Suite 100 • Austin, Texas 78744-1645

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## **MEDICAL FEE DISPUTE RESOLUTION FINDINGS AND DECISION**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **Requestor Name and Address**

SURGERY SPECIALTY HOSPITAL OF  
AMERICA S.E.  
4301 VISTA ROAD  
PASADENA TX 77504

**Carrier's Austin Representative Box**  
#29

#### **Respondent Name**

CITY OF HOUSTON

#### **MFDR Date Received**

JANUARY 7, 2009

#### **MFDR Tracking Number**

M4-09-4860-01

### **REQUESTOR'S POSITION SUMMARY**

**Requestor's Position Summary Dated January 6, 2009:** "The Carrier did not make a legal denial of reimbursement because Surgery Specialty Hospital of America S.E. was not provided with a sufficient explanation or the proper denial reasons to justify the denial of reimbursement of the disputed charges. In addition, the Carrier applied the incorrect reimbursement methodology to Surgery Specialty Hospital of America S.E charges...In this instance, the audited charges that remained after the last bill review by the insurance Carrier **\$46,114.21**. Using the Stop Loss Method, the total amount that Surgery Specialty Hospital of America S.E should have been reimbursed for the services it provided was **\$34,585.66**. The prior amounts paid by the Carrier were **\$2,236.00**. Therefore, the Carrier is required to reimburse the remainder of the Workers' Compensation reimbursement amount of **\$32,349.66**, plus any and all interest applicable."

**Amount in Dispute:** \$57,029.32

### **RESPONDENT'S POSITION SUMMARY**

**Respondent's Position Summary Dated January 23, 2009:** "Respondent audited the charges accordingly and issued payment in the amount of \$9,659.50. As shown in the EOBs, this amount was paid and all other charges were denied in accordance with the Medical Fee Guideline on a fair and reasonable basis. The Provider failed to supply invoices of costs to justify its billing fees. The auditing company has provided a cost breakdown of the fees associated with its reduction in charges. No additional reimbursement is owed."

**Response Submitted by:** Harris & Harris

**Respondent's Supplemental Position Summary Dated September 8, 2011:** "Healthcare provider Vista Hospital of Dallas has failed to demonstrate that the dates of service meet the minimum requirements set out under TDI-DWC Rule 134.401(c)(6) for exceeding the minimum stop-loss threshold of \$40,000 and that the admission involved unusually costly and unusually extensive services pursuant to *Texas Mutual Insurance Co. v. Vista Community Medical Center, LLP, 275 S.W.3d at 551*. Carrier attaches as evidence Exhibit 2, the Affidavit of Dr. James Hood ewith excerpts of the Hospital's records submitted for this admission indicating his expert opinion that this admission does not involve unusually extensive services beyond what would be expected for such care."

**Response Submitted by:** Pappas & Suchma, PC.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Disputed Dates	Disputed Services	Amount In Dispute	Amount Due
January 16, 2008 through January 17, 2008	Inpatient Hospital Services	\$57,029.32	\$0.00

## **FINDINGS AND DECISION**

This medical fee dispute is decided pursuant to Texas Labor Code §413.031 and all applicable, adopted rules of the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation.

### **Background**

1. 28 Texas Administrative Code §133.240, 31 *Texas Register* 3544, effective May 2, 2006, sets out the procedures for medical payments and denials.
2. 28 Texas Administrative Code §133.2, 31 *Texas Register* 3544, effective May 2, 2006, sets out the definition of final action.
3. 28 Texas Administrative Code §133.305 and §133.307, 31 *Texas Register* 10314, applicable to requests filed on or after January 15, 2007, sets out the procedures for resolving medical fee disputes.
4. 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.401, 22 *Texas Register* 6264, effective August 1, 1997, sets out the fee guidelines for inpatient services rendered in an acute care hospital.
5. 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.1, 31 *Texas Register* 3561, effective May 2, 2006, sets out the guidelines for a fair and reasonable amount of reimbursement in the absence of a contract or an applicable division fee guideline.
6. The services in dispute were reduced/denied by the respondent with the following reason codes:  
  
Explanation of Benefits
  - W1 – Workers compensation state fee schedule adj.
  - 520-Inpatient surgical per diem allowance.

### **Issues**

1. Did the respondent provide sufficient explanation for denial of the disputed services?
2. Did the audited charges exceed \$40,000.00?
3. Did the admission in dispute involve unusually extensive services?
4. Did the admission in dispute involve unusually costly services?
5. Is the requestor entitled to additional reimbursement?

### **Findings**

This dispute relates to inpatient surgical services provided in a hospital setting with reimbursement subject to the provisions of Division rule at 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.401, titled *Acute Care Inpatient Hospital Fee Guideline*, effective August 1, 1997, 22 *Texas Register* 6264. The Third Court of Appeals' November 13, 2008 opinion in *Texas Mutual Insurance Company v. Vista Community Medical Center, LLP, 275 South Western Reporter Third* 538, 550 (Texas Appeals – Austin 2008, petition denied) addressed a challenge to the interpretation of 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.401. The Court concluded that "to be eligible for reimbursement under the Stop-Loss Exception, a hospital must demonstrate that the total audited charges exceed \$40,000 and that an admission involved unusually costly and unusually extensive services." Both the requestor and respondent in this case were notified via form letter that the mandate for the decision cited above was issued on January 19, 2011. Each was given the opportunity to supplement their original MDR submission, position or response as applicable. The division received supplemental information as noted in the position summaries above. The supplemental information was shared among the parties as appropriate. The documentation filed by the requestor and respondent to date will be considered in determining whether the admission in dispute is eligible for reimbursement under the stop-loss method of payment. Consistent with the Third Court of Appeals' November 13, 2008 opinion, the division will address whether the total audited charges **in this case** exceed \$40,000; whether the admission and disputed services **in this case** are unusually extensive; and whether the admission and disputed services **in this case** are unusually costly. 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.401(c)(2)(C) states, in pertinent part, that "Independent reimbursement is allowed on a case-by-case basis if the particular case exceeds the stop-loss threshold as described in paragraph (6) of this subsection..." 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.401(c)(6) puts forth the requirements to meet the three factors that will be discussed.

1. 28 Texas Administrative Code §133.240(a) and (e), 31 Texas Register 3544, effective May 2, 2006, state, in pertinent part, that “ (a) An insurance carrier shall take final action after conducting bill review on a complete medical bill...” and “(e) The insurance carrier shall send the explanation of benefits in the form and manner prescribed by the Division...” Furthermore, 28 Texas Administrative Code §133.2, 31 Texas Register 3544, states, in pertinent part “(4) Final action on a medical bill-- (A) sending a payment that makes the total reimbursement for that bill a fair and reasonable reimbursement in accordance with §134.1 of this title (relating to Medical Reimbursement); and/or (B) denying a charge on the medical bill.” The requestor asserts in its position statement that:

“The Carrier did not make a legal denial of reimbursement because Surgery Specialty Hospital of America S.E. was not provided with a sufficient explanation or the proper denial reasons to justify the denial of reimbursement of the disputed charges.”

Review of the submitted documentation finds that the explanation of benefits dated April 7, 2008 was issued using the division-approved form TWCC 62 and noted payment exception codes “W1 and 520” for the services in dispute.

These payment exception codes support an explanation for the reduction of reimbursement based on the Per Diem provision in former 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.401. These reasons support a reduction of the reimbursement amount from the requested stop-loss exception payment reimbursement methodology to the standard per diem methodology amount and provided sufficient explanation to allow the provider to understand the reason(s) for the insurance carrier's action(s). The Division therefore concludes that the insurance carrier has met the requirements of §133.240, and §133.2.

2. 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.401(c)(6)(A)(i) states “...to be eligible for stop-loss payment the total audited charges for a hospital admission must exceed \$40,000, the minimum stop-loss threshold.” Furthermore, (A) (v) of that same section states “...Audited charges are those charges which remain after a bill review by the insurance carrier has been performed...” Review of the explanation of benefits issued by the carrier finds that the carrier did not deduct any charges in accordance with §134.401(c)(6)(A)(v); therefore the audited charges equal \$76,039.09. The Division concludes that the total audited charges exceed \$40,000.
3. The requestor in its position statement presumes that it is entitled to the stop loss method of payment because the audited charges exceed \$40,000. As noted above, the Third Court of Appeals in its November 13, 2008 opinion rendered judgment to the contrary. The Court concluded that “to be eligible for reimbursement under the Stop-Loss Exception, a hospital must demonstrate that the total audited charges exceed \$40,000 and that an admission involved...unusually extensive services.” The requestor failed to demonstrate that the particulars of the admission in dispute constitute unusually extensive services; therefore, the division finds that the requestor did not meet 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.401(c)(6).
4. In regards to whether the services were unusually costly, the requestor presumes that because the bill exceeds \$40,000, the stop loss method of payment should apply. The Third Court of Appeals' November 13, 2008 opinion concluded that in order to be eligible for reimbursement under the stop-loss exception, a hospital must **demonstrate** that an admission involved unusually costly services thereby affirming 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.401(c)(6) which states that “Stop-loss is an independent reimbursement methodology established to ensure fair and reasonable compensation to the hospital for unusually costly services rendered during treatment to an injured worker.” The requestor failed to demonstrate that the particulars of the admission in dispute constitutes unusually costly services; therefore, the division finds that the requestor failed to meet 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.401(c)(6).
5. For the reasons stated above the services in dispute are not eligible for the stop-loss method of reimbursement. Consequently, reimbursement shall be calculated pursuant to 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.401(c)(1) titled *Standard Per Diem Amount* and §134.401(c)(4) titled *Additional Reimbursements*. The Division notes that additional reimbursements under §134.401(c)(4) apply only to bills that do not reach the stop-loss threshold described in subsection (c)(6) of this section.
  - Review of the submitted documentation finds that the services provided were surgical; therefore the standard per diem amount of \$1,118.00 per day applies. Division rule at 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.401(c)(3)(ii) states, in pertinent part, that “The applicable Workers' Compensation Standard Per Diem Amount (SPDA) is multiplied by the length of stay (LOS) for admission...” The length of stay was one day. The surgical per diem rate of \$1,118 multiplied by the length of stay of one day results in an allowable amount of \$1,118.00.
  - 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.401(c)(4)(A), states “When medically necessary the following services indicated by revenue codes shall be reimbursed at cost to the hospital plus 10%: (i) Implantables

(revenue codes 275, 276, and 278), and (ii) Orthotics and prosthetics (revenue code 274).” A review of the submitted medical bill indicates that the requestor billed revenue code 278 for Implants at \$36,430.00. Review of the medical documentation provided finds that although the requestor billed items under revenue code 278, no invoices were found to support the cost of the implantables billed. For that reason, no additional reimbursement can be recommended.

- 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.401(c)(4)(C) states “Pharmaceuticals administered during the admission and greater than \$250 charged per dose shall be reimbursed at cost to the hospital plus 10%. Dose is the amount of a drug or other substance to be administered at one time.” A review of the submitted itemized statement finds that the requestor billed \$425.00/unit for Morphine PCA and \$802.00/unit for Vancomycin 1GM IVPB. The requestor did not submit documentation to support what the cost to the hospital was for these items billed under revenue code 250. For that reason, additional reimbursement for these items cannot be recommended.

The division concludes that the total allowable for this admission is \$1,118.00. The respondent issued payment in the amount of \$9,659.50. Based upon the documentation submitted, no additional reimbursement can be recommended.

### Conclusion

The submitted documentation does not support the reimbursement amount sought by the requestor. The requestor in this case demonstrated that the audited charges exceed \$40,000, but failed to demonstrate that the disputed inpatient hospital admission involved unusually extensive services, and failed to demonstrate that the services in dispute were unusually costly. Consequently, 28 Texas Administrative Code §134.401(c)(1) titled *Standard Per Diem Amount*, and §134.401(c)(4) titled *Additional Reimbursements* are applied and result in no additional reimbursement.

### **ORDER**

Based upon the documentation submitted by the parties and in accordance with the provisions of Texas Labor Code §413.031, the Division has determined that the requestor is entitled to \$0.00 additional reimbursement for the services in dispute.

### Authorized Signature

_____ Signature	_____ Medical Fee Dispute Resolution Officer	_____ 2/6/2014 Date
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_____ Signature	_____ Medical Fee Dispute Resolution Manager	_____ 2/6/2014 Date
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### **YOUR RIGHT TO APPEAL**

Either party to this medical fee dispute may appeal this decision by requesting a contested case hearing. A completed **Request for a Medical Contested Case Hearing** (form **DWC045A**) must be received by the DWC Chief Clerk of Proceedings within **twenty** days of your receipt of this decision. A request for hearing should be sent to: Chief Clerk of Proceedings, Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers Compensation, P.O. Box 17787, Austin, Texas, 78744. The party seeking review of the MDR decision shall deliver a copy of the request for a hearing to all other parties involved in the dispute at the same time the request is filed with the Division. **Please include a copy of the *Medical Fee Dispute Resolution Findings and Decision*** together with any other required information specified in 28 Texas Administrative Code §148.3(c), including a **certificate of service demonstrating that the request has been sent to the other party.**

**Si prefiere hablar con una persona en español acerca de ésta correspondencia, favor de llamar a 512-804-4812.**