

Payment for Lumbar Fusion Surgery Rule – Effective Jan. 1, 2018

What providers, employers and managed care organizations (MCOs) should know when injured workers elect to have lumbar fusion surgery

Mission

BWC's mission is to protect Ohio's injured workers and employers through the prevention, care and management of workplace injuries and illnesses at fair rates.

That's the reason behind the development of *Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 4123-6-32*. This rule:

- Promotes a comprehensive, conservative approach for injured worker care;
- Enhances the informed decision-making process;
- Solidifies communication expectations between the operating surgeon, provider of record and injured worker while providing statewide consistency.

Background

We developed this rule through a collaborative effort among our:

- Spine care subcommittee members;
- The Health Care Quality Assurance Advisory Committee members;
- MCO medical directors.

We used an evidenced-based methodology to review approaches by various payers and systems. We also consulted internal and external data on outcomes from spinal fusion surgery and the *Official Disability Guidelines* in formulating this rule.

Goal

Our intent is:

- To promote the highest quality of care relative to spinal fusion surgery;
- Improve alignment in expectations of those involved to maximize positive outcomes and minimize disability;
- Facilitate adherence to best practice standards reflected in medical research and consultation with subject matter experts.

Key expectations

The following are prerequisites for authorization for lumbar fusion surgery:

- At least 60 days' trial of conservative care;
- A health and behavior assessment;
- Review of, and signed acknowledgement of, the informed decision-making document [What BWC wants you to know about Lumbar Fusion Surgery](#) by the injured worker, physician of record and surgeon;
- Medical evaluation of risk factors related to the surgery;
- Documentation of specific medical and surgical indications for the surgery.

The rule becomes effective Jan. 1, 2018. You can see the rule [here](#).