

CARE PATH 6

LUMBAR-SACRAL SPINE (LOW BACK INJURY) HERNIATED DISC/RADICULOPATHY

HERNIATED DISC
with or without
RADICULAR SYMPTOMS

SOFT TISSUE INJURY
STRAIN/SPRAIN/CONTUSION
with
RADICULOPATHY

HERNIATED DISC with
RADICULOPATHY and SEVERE
NEUROLOGICAL COMPRESSION
or COMPROMISE

Conservative Therapy
(up to 4 weeks)

Includes:

- Provider office visits (up to 5)
- Medications¹
- Bed rest (maximum 2 - 4 days)
- Increasing exercise
- Consider PT program (2-3 times per week for 2-4 weeks)³

Progressive
Neurologic
Deficit?

YES

NO

4 WEEKS POST INJURY

Improvement
in symptoms
based on
objective
findings?

YES

NO

Continue
Conservative
Therapy

Diagnostic Evaluation

May include:

- EMG (if the diagnosis of radiculopathy is obvious & specific on clinical examination, EMG testing is not recommended)
- SEP
- MRI or CT

Referral to Neurology,
Physiatry, Neurosurgery, or
Orthopedic Surgery

Diagnostic Evaluation
(if not conducted previously)

- MRI
- CT
- Myelogram
- Discogram

Test Result
(-)
◆ Go To
Conservative
Therapy

Test Res
(+)

DISC SURGERY

Post-Surgical PT
2-3 times a week for
4-6 weeks

Improved
within 8
weeks?

NO

YES

Continue PT

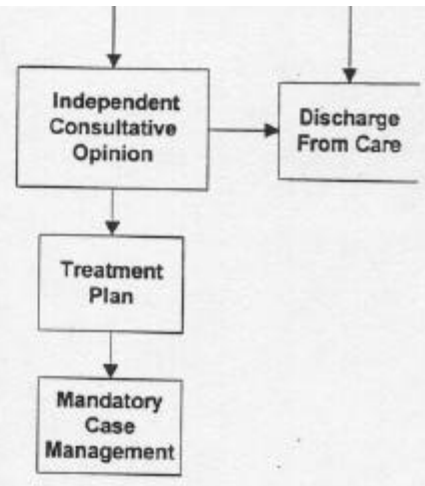
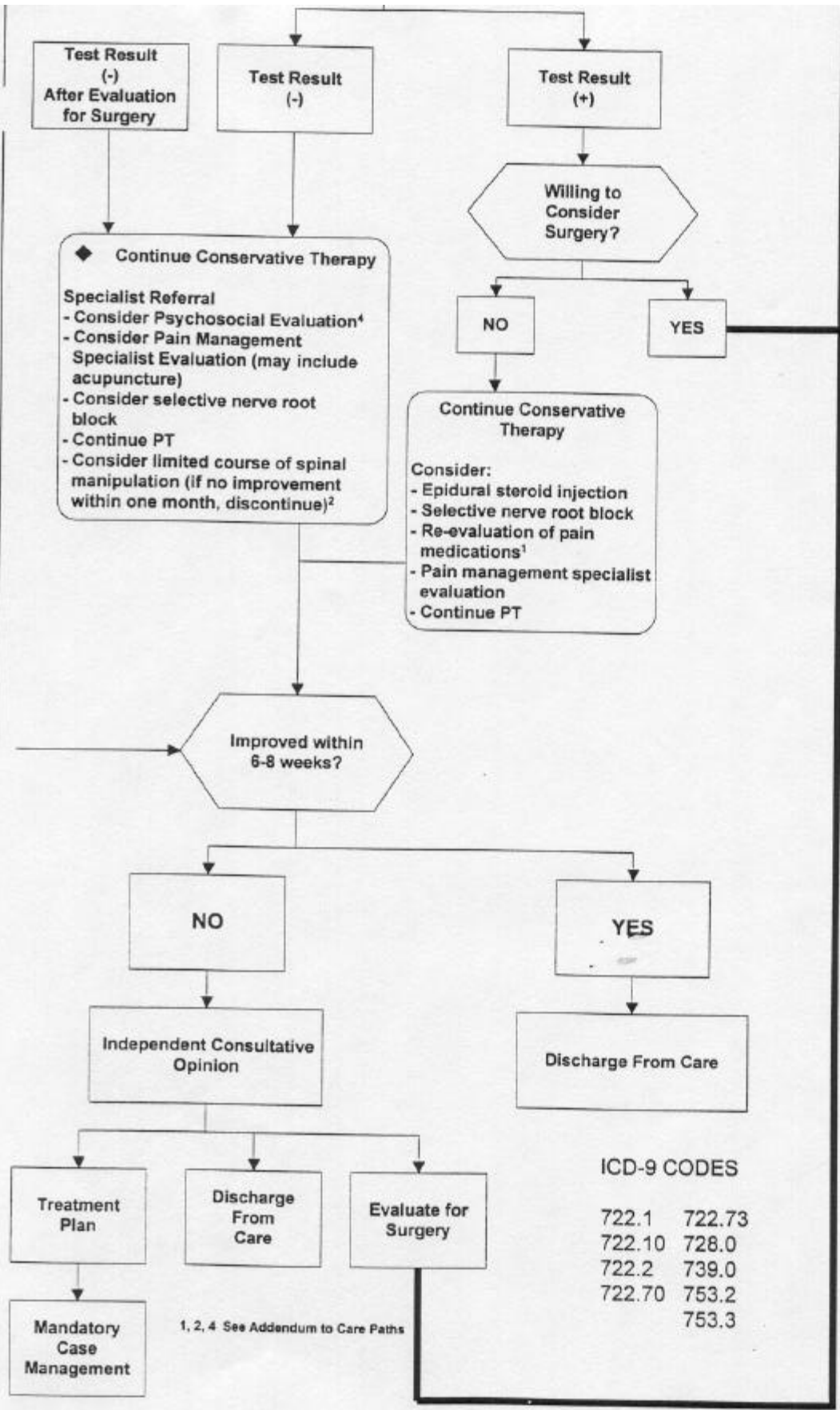
Discharge
from Ca

Improved
within 16
weeks?

NO

YES

1, 3 See Addendum to Care Paths



ICD-9 CODES

- 722.1 722.73
- 722.10 728.0
- 722.2 739.0
- 722.70 753.2
- 753.3

1, 2, 4 See Addendum to Care Paths

NOTE: These Care Paths identify typical courses of intervention. There may be patients who require more or less treatment. However, cases that deviate from the Care Paths may be subject to more careful scrutiny and may require documentation of the special circumstances. Treatments must be based on patient need and professional judgment. Deviations may be justified by individual circumstances, such as pre-existing conditions and/or comorbidities. The Care Paths are only intended for use when the injury was caused by a motor vehicle accident (MVA). If at any point in the decision making process the healthcare provider finds evidence that the injury was not caused by a MVA, the provider must contact the patient's PIP carrier and medical insurance carrier.

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