



Musculoskeletal Surgery Checklist for Spine

Please be prepared to provide National Imaging Associates, Inc. (NIA)¹ with the following information when requesting prior authorization for outpatient and inpatient lumbar and cervical spine surgeries:

Required Information

- Member information: first and last name, healthcare company and ID number, date of birth, address
- Ordering physician information: name, NPI, phone number, fax number, address
- Anticipated date of surgery
- Requested surgery and CPT codes (NOTE: only one authorization per surgery is usually required)
- ICD-10 codes
- Facility information: name of facility where the surgery will be performed, address, TIN, requested setting (inpatient, outpatient, ambulatory surgical center)
- Details justifying the surgical procedure:
 1. Primary Clinical Diagnosis
 2. Current symptoms
 3. Date of onset of symptoms or length of time member has had symptoms
 4. Physician exam findings (including findings applicable to the requested services)
 5. Non-operative treatment modalities completed, dates and length of treatments, duration of pain relief, and results (e.g., physical therapy, epidural injections, chiropractic or osteopathic manipulation, hot pads, massage, ice packs and medication)
 6. Diagnostic imaging results
 7. BMI/Weight and Height, tobacco use, and mental health status

Please be prepared to provide the following information, if requested:

1. Surgeon's recent clinical notes outlining clinical conditions and member's symptoms (including type, onset, and length of symptoms)
2. Relevant clinical and surgical history related to the proposed surgery
3. Physical exam findings
4. Proposed surgical plan outlined by the requesting surgeon
5. Non-operative treatment modalities completed, dates and length of treatments completed, duration of pain relief, and results
 - a. Documented failure of at least six (6) consecutive weeks (*generally recommended within the past six (6) months) of any two (2) of the following physician-directed conservative treatments:
 - i. analgesics, steroids, and/or NSAIDs;
 - ii. structured program of physical therapy;

¹ Effective 1/20/2023, National Imaging Associates, Inc. is now a subsidiary of Evolent Health. Evolent Health and its affiliates and subsidiaries collectively referred to as "Evolent."

- iii. structured home exercise program prescribed by a physical therapist, chiropractic provider or physician;
 - iv. epidural steroid injections and/or facet injections/selective nerve root block.
 - b. *Six (6) to twelve (12) consecutive months of active treatment is required for cervical fusions requested for treatment of axial neck pain
 - c. *Six (6) months conservative treatment is required for lumbar fusions requested for treatment of isolated low back pain
 - d. *Cervical requests: Significant progressive neurological deficit (motor deficit, bowel or bladder dysfunction) or positive clinical findings of myelopathy; with evidence of progressive neurologic deficits consistent with worsening spinal cord compression **may** result in the elimination of conservative treatment
 - e. *Lumbar requests: Cauda equina syndrome or progressive nerve compression resulting in *significant* acute neurologic deficit (motor) may result in the elimination of conservative treatment
- 6. Diagnostic Imaging reports (actual imaging report required)
 - a. Generally recommended to be no older than six (6) months of the proposed surgery
- 7. BMI/Weight and Height, tobacco use, and mental health status
 - a. Cervical and lumbar fusions: members must be free from smoking and/or nicotine use for at least six (6) weeks prior to surgery and during the entire period of fusion healing.
 - b. Lumbar fusions requested for chronic low back pain: completion of a comprehensive cognitive-behavioral rehabilitation program is mandatory.