

The Elective Spinal Surgery Clinical Review model

Includes:

- Any request for spinal surgery inclusive of Fusions, Micro-discectomies, Discectomies, Laminectomies, Fixations and Disc Replacements/Arthroplasties

Does not include (Exclusion Criteria):

- Spinal injections (including Medial Branch Blocks)
- Radio Frequency Denervations (RFDs)
- Spinal Cord Stimulators or other IPTs (which have their own review process)
- Diagnostic Procedures (including provocative discography)
- Retrospective requests (which are handed at the Agent level- yet a SAP billing review referral can be made)

A request for spinal surgery must include:

- A detailed description of the proposed surgical procedure(s)
- A detailed description of the worker's clinical symptoms and physical signs (a copy of the surgeon's letter to the worker's GP is usually sufficient)
- A copy of relevant radiology reports
- A list of the MBS items the surgeon intends to invoice
- If clinical symptoms and radiology reports do not correlate, an explanation as to why

This information is a minimum requirement and does not attract a fee

AGENTS MUST:

- Confirm that liability for the spinal injury has been accepted (if a non-spinal surgeon IME is arranged to determine liability, do NOT ask the examiner to comment on the surgery request itself as this is outside of their expertise)
- Confirm that the requesting surgeon has provided clinical justification, radiology reports and MBS items
- Initiate the Surgery Process in Novus, generate the Novus USR MA: Refer to Medical Advisor task and complete "**Referral details**" on Medical Advisor Referral and Recommendation Eform
FOR ALL LUMBAR FUSION REQUESTS on **task description box** type "Elective Spinal Surgery Review" and provide your contact details (full name, full phone no. and email address) then transfer task to WorkSafe HDSG work queue. Please link the relevant information to the task **Documents Tab**
- **FOR ALL OTHER TYPES OF SPINAL SURGERY REQUESTS** on **task description box** type "Elective Spinal Surgery Review" and provide your contact details (full name, full phone no. and email address) then transfer task to your **MA** work queue. Please link the relevant information to the task **Documents Tab**. The MA will determine if referral to WorkSafe is required.

OR proceed by a Fast Track approval if one of the following criteria is met:

- The request is clinically urgent. MA walk ups are to be used - or at least review by a IMA
- Complications (such as infection) following recently approved surgery
- There is a binding medical panel opinion
- Recent spinal surgeon IME report or MD IME report explicitly states that the specific surgery requested is warranted (e.g. a L4/5 ALIF would be appropriate, but the originally requested L4/5, L5/S1 ALIF is not)

WorkSafe Process for Elective Spinal Surgery

The MA will determine if the clinical request can be approved, and what the appropriate MBS items are. If the MA is not able to approve the request, WorkSafe will arrange a desktop review by consultant spinal surgeons who are members of the Surgery Advisory Panel (SAP).

The outcome of a SAP review for the Agent to action will be one of:

- Approve (with or without a variation to the proposed MBS items)
- Deny (WorkSafe will draft a Surgery Rejection letter in Novus)
- Further information required (either for access to the worker's medical imaging online or the Agent is to seek other specified information and send it to WorkSafe Clinical Panel when received)
- Agent to arrange a IME with a spinal surgeon and action the resulting recommendations from the examiner accordingly
- Mi-Support will provide MD IME appointment to agent. Agent follows MD IME work practice and needs to action the resulting recommendations from the examiners accordingly

Every approval for spinal surgery must be communicated to the requesting surgeon using the spinal surgery approval letter template available on Agent Online, including listing the approved MBS items. Do NOT place the requesting surgeon as a 'cc' on the worker's approval letter (as that letter does not refer to the approved MBS items specifically).