

American Arbitration Association
New York No-Fault Arbitration Tribunal

In the Matter of the Arbitration between:

BL Pain Management PLLC
(Applicant)

- and -

Allstate Fire & Casualty Insurance Company
(Respondent)

AAA Case No. 17-24-1356-3292

Applicant's File No. 178677

Insurer's Claim File No. 0719772633 2FB

NAIC No. 29688

ARBITRATION AWARD

I, Anne Malone, the undersigned arbitrator, designated by the American Arbitration Association pursuant to the Rules for New York State No-Fault Arbitration, adopted pursuant to regulations promulgated by the Superintendent of Insurance, having been duly sworn, and having heard the proofs and allegations of the parties make the following **AWARD**:

Injured Person(s) hereinafter referred to as: EIP

1. Hearing(s) held on 02/18/2025
Declared closed by the arbitrator on 02/18/2025

Dimitry Joffe, Esq. from The Law Offices of John Gallagher, PLLC participated virtually for the Applicant

Olga Gromyko, Esq. from Law Offices of John Trop participated virtually for the Respondent

2. The amount claimed in the Arbitration Request, **\$7,457.23**, was NOT AMENDED at the oral hearing.
Stipulations WERE NOT made by the parties regarding the issues to be determined.
3. Summary of Issues in Dispute

The 31year old EIP reported involvement in a motor vehicle accident on June 29, 2023; claimed related injury and underwent percutaneous disectomy provided by the applicant on December 13, 2023.

The applicant submitted a claim for these medical services, partial payment of which was timely made by the respondent based upon its determination of the correct reimbursable amount pursuant to the New York Workers' Compensation Medical Fee Schedule.

The issue to be determined at the hearing is whether the respondent established its fee schedule defense.

4. Findings, Conclusions, and Basis Therefor

This hearing was held on Zoom and the decision is based upon the documents reviewed in the Modria File as well as the arguments made by counsel and/or representative at the arbitration hearing. Only the arguments presented at the hearing are preserved in this decision; all other arguments not presented at the hearing are considered waived.

The applicant billed a total of \$7,457.23 for the services at issue, for which the respondent made partial payment of \$4,972.18 pursuant to its calculation of the correct reimbursable amount pursuant to the appropriate fee schedule, leaving a balance of \$2,485.05. This payment was not acknowledged in the AR-1, however, the respondent submitted a copy of the cancelled check in this amount.

To prevail in its fee schedule defense, the respondent must demonstrate by competent evidentiary proof that the applicant's claims are in excess of the appropriate fee schedule. If the respondent fails to do so, its defense of noncompliance with the New York Workers' Compensation Medical Fee Schedule cannot be sustained. See Continental Medical, P.C. v Travelers Indemnity Co., 11 Misc. 3d 145A (App. Term 1st Dept. 2006.)

An insurer fails to raise a triable issue of fact with respect to a defense that the fees charged were not in conformity with the Workers' Compensation fee schedule when it does not specify the actual reimbursement rates which formed the basis for its determination that the claimant billed in excess of the maximum amount permitted. See St. Vincent Medical Services, P.C. v. GEICO Ins. Co., 29 Misc.3d 141(A), 907 N.Y.S.2d 441 (App. Term 2d, Dec. 8, 2010.)

A fee schedule defense does not always require expert proof. There are two fee schedule scenarios. The first involves the basic application of the fee codes and simple arithmetic. The second scenario involves interpretation of the codes and often requires testimony and expertise beyond that of a lay individual. I find that the fee schedule issue presented in this case is analogous to the latter scenario and requires an expert's opinion.

The applicant submitted the affidavit of Terri Lahr, CPC, a certified professional fee coder who provided a comprehensive review of the fee scheduled issues involved in this claim and determined that the total reimbursable amount is \$4,955.66.

The respondent has already made payment in excess of this amount and contends that no further reimbursement is due.

The applicant did not submit an affidavit from a certified professional fee coder, medical professional or other expert to refute the findings of the respondent's expert.

Based on the foregoing, the respondent has established its fee schedule defense.

Accordingly, the claim is dismissed with prejudice.

Any further issues submitted in the record are held to be moot and/or waived insofar as they were not raised at the time of this hearing. This decision is in full disposition of all claims for no-fault benefits presently before this Arbitrator.

5. Optional imposition of administrative costs on Applicant.
Applicable for arbitration requests filed on and after March 1, 2002.

I do NOT impose the administrative costs of arbitration to the applicant, in the amount established for the current calendar year by the Designated Organization.

6. I find as follows with regard to the policy issues before me:

- ☐ The policy was not in force on the date of the accident
- ☐ The applicant was excluded under policy conditions or exclusions
- ☐ The applicant violated policy conditions, resulting in exclusion from coverage
- ☐ The applicant was not an "eligible injured person"
- ☐ The conditions for MVAIC eligibility were not met
- ☐ The injured person was not a "qualified person" (under the MVAIC)
- ☐ The applicant's injuries didn't arise out of the "use or operation" of a motor vehicle
- ☐ The respondent is not subject to the jurisdiction of the New York No-Fault arbitration forum

Accordingly, the claim is DENIED in its entirety

This award is in full settlement of all no-fault benefit claims submitted to this arbitrator.

State of CT

SS :

County of Fairfield

I, Anne Malone, do hereby affirm upon my oath as arbitrator that I am the individual described in and who executed this instrument, which is my award.

02/18/2025
(Dated)

Anne Malone

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This award is payable within 30 calendar days of the date of transmittal of award to parties.

This award is final and binding unless modified or vacated by a master arbitrator. Insurance Department Regulation No. 68 (11 NYCRR 65-4.10) contains time limits and grounds upon which this award may be appealed to a master arbitrator. An appeal to a master arbitrator must be made within 21 days after the mailing of this award. All insurers have copies of the regulation. Applicants may obtain a copy from the Insurance Department.

ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE

Document Name: Final Award Form
Unique Modria Document ID:
0317a7c3a6a406b445659f9861d77418

Electronically Signed

Your name: Anne Malone
Signed on: 02/18/2025