

American Arbitration Association
New York No-Fault Arbitration Tribunal

In the Matter of the Arbitration between:

Elite Rx Inc.
(Applicant)

- and -

Allstate Insurance Company
(Respondent)

AAA Case No. 17-25-1394-5485

Applicant's File No. LIP-45749

Insurer's Claim File No. 0778559401

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 03/30/2026
Declared closed by the arbitrator on 03/30/2026

Lee-Ann Trupia, Esq. from Law Offices of Ilya E Parnas P.C. participated virtually for the Applicant

Frank Gissaro, Esq. from Law Offices Of Richard Schoenberg participated virtually for the Respondent

2. The amount claimed in the Arbitration Request, **\$2,260.10**, was AMENDED and permitted by the arbitrator at the oral hearing.

The amount claimed was amended by the applicant to \$1,963.59 to conform to the appropriate fee schedule. The respondent did not agree to this amended amount.

Stipulations WERE NOT made by the parties regarding the issues to be determined.

3. Summary of Issues in Dispute

The 62 year old EIP reported involvement in a motor vehicle accident on December 14, 2024; claimed related injury and received Lidocaine ointment provided by the applicant on December 31, 2024.

The applicant submitted a claim for this topical prescription medication, payment of which was timely denied by the respondent based upon a peer review by Richard Coven, M.D. dated March 25, 2025.

The respondent also asserted a fee schedule defense.

The issues to be determined at the hearing are:

Whether the respondent established that the topical prescription medication at issue was not medically necessary.

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 from 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.

Medical Necessity

The respondent denied payment for the topical Lidocaine ointment for a lack of medical necessity.

In order to support a lack of medical necessity defense respondent must "set forth a factual basis and medical rationale for the peer reviewer's [or examining physician's] determination that there was a lack of medical necessity for the services rendered." Provvedere, Inc. v. Republic Western Ins. Co., 2014 NY Slip Op 50219(U) (App. Term2d, 11th and 13th Jud. Dists. 2014.) Respondent bears the burden of production in support of its lack of medical necessity defense, which if established shifts the burden of persuasion to applicant. See Bronx Expert Radiology, P.C. v. Travelers Ins. Co., 2006 NY Slip Op 52116 (App. Term 1st Dept. 2006.)

The Civil Courts have held that a defendant's peer review or report of medical examination must set forth more than just a basic recitation of the expert's opinion. The trial courts have held that a peer review or medical examination report's medical rationale will be insufficient to meet respondent's burden of proof if: 1) the medical rationale of its expert witness is not supported by evidence of a deviation from "generally accepted medical" standards; 2) the expert fails to cite to medical authority, standard, or generally accepted specifics as to the claim at issue, is conclusory or vague. See Nir v. Allstate, 7 Misc.3d 544 (N.Y. City Civ. Ct. 2005.)

In support of its contention that the Lidocaine ointment provided by the applicant was not medically necessary, respondent relies upon the report of the peer review by Dr. Coven, who reviewed the medical records of the EIP, noted the injuries claimed and the treatment rendered to her. Dr. Coven considered possible arguments and justification for the need for the topical prescription medication at issue and determined that it was not warranted under the circumstances presented.

He discussed the standard of care for the sprain/strain injuries sustained by the EIP and determined that oral medication was medically necessary, but topical medication did not meet these criteria. He specifically noted that the EIP underwent an initial evaluation by Dr. Zakaria on December 19, 2024, 5 days post-accident at which time the Lidocaine topical medication was recommended. Dr. Coven discussed in detail the injuries sustained by the EIP and the treatment and medication recommended for her.

He determined that prescribing topical Lidocaine for the injuries sustained by the EIP warrants further research and that there is a general lack of data regarding the safety and effectiveness and utility of lidocaine as a topical analgesic and improvements in patch delivery systems. He concluded that there is no indication that sprain/strain and/or contusion/strain injuries would require this type of medication or that it would be standard of care.

Although Dr. Coven supported, with relevant medical literature, his opinion that the topical Lidocaine ointment provided to the EIP was not medically necessary, I find that the peer review is conclusory and factually insufficient to meet the burden of rebutting the applicant's presumption of medical necessity.

The respondent did not provide an adequate response to the recommendations made by the EIP's treating medical providers to establish that the topical medication at issue was not medically necessary. Under these circumstances, pursuant to Provvedere, Inc., *supra* the burden did not shift to the applicant since respondent did not meet its burden to establish lack of medical necessity.

Based on the foregoing, I find that the respondent has failed to establish that the topical prescription Lidocaine ointment at issue was not medically necessary.

Therefore, an award will be issued in favor of the applicant pursuant to the appropriate fee schedule.

Fee Schedule

In order 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.)

The respondent supported its fee schedule defense with a copy of the Redbook information regarding the correct reimbursable amount for the Lidocaine ointment provided to this EIP. According to th Redbood, the total amount for this topical medication, as prescribed for this EIP is \$1,902.50.

The applicant did not submit an affidavit or other evidence from a certified professional fee coder, medical professional or other expert to refute the evidence submitted by the respondent.

Based on the foregoing, the respondent failed to establish its fee schedule defense.

Accordingly, the applicant is awarded \$1,902.50 in disposition of this claim.

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 applicant is AWARDED the following:

A.

Medical		From/To	Claim Amount	Amount Amended	Status
	Elite Rx Inc.	12/31/24 - 12/31/24	\$2,260.10	\$1,963.59	Awarded: \$1,902.50
Total			\$2,260.10		Awarded: \$1,902.50

B. The insurer shall also compute and pay the applicant interest set forth below. 04/04/2025 is the date that interest shall accrue from. This is a relevant date only to the extent set forth below.

Applicant is awarded interest pursuant to the no-fault regulations. See generally, 11 NYCRR §65-3.9. Interest shall be calculated "at a rate of two percent per month, calculated on a *pro rata* basis using a 30 day month." See 11 NYCRR §64-3.9(a). A claim becomes overdue when it is not paid within 30 days after a proper demand is made for its payment. However, the regulations toll the accrual of interest when an applicant "does not request arbitration or institute a lawsuit within 30 days after the receipt of a denial of claim form or payment of benefits" calculated pursuant to Insurance Department regulations. Where a claim is untimely denied, or not denied or paid, interest shall accrue as of the 30th day following the date the claim is presented by the claimant to the insurer for payment. Where a claim is timely denied, interest shall accrue as of the date an action is commenced or an arbitration requested, unless an action is commenced or an arbitration requested within 30 days after receipt of the denial, in which event interest shall begin to accrue as of the date the denial is received by the claimant. See, 11 NYCRR §65-3.9(c.) The Superintendent and the New York Court of Appeals has interpreted this provision to apply regardless of whether the particular denial was timely. LMK Psychological Servs. P.C. v. State Farm Mut. Auto. Ins. Co., 12 NY3d 217 (2009.)

C. Attorney's Fees

The insurer shall also pay the applicant for attorney's fees as set forth below

Applicant is awarded statutory attorney's fees pursuant to the no fault regulations. For cases filed after February 4, 2015 the attorney's fee shall be calculated as follows: 20% of the amount of first-party benefits awarded, plus interest thereon subject to no minimum fee and a maximum of \$1,360.00. See 11 NYCRR §65-4.6(d.)

- D. The respondent shall also pay the applicant forty dollars (\$40) to reimburse the applicant for the fee paid to the Designated Organization, unless the fee was previously returned pursuant to an earlier award.

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.

04/02/2026

(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:
d4e31d4a926a27b14a399d964d807601

Electronically Signed

Your name: Anne Malone
Signed on: 04/02/2026