

American Arbitration Association  
New York No-Fault Arbitration Tribunal

In the Matter of the Arbitration between:

Pisces Physical Therapy PC  
(Applicant)

- and -

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance  
Company  
(Respondent)

AAA Case No. 17-25-1425-8980

Applicant's File No. MB-98694

Insurer's Claim File No. 32-74H2-99B

NAIC No. 25178

**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 06/29/2026  
Declared closed by the arbitrator on 06/29/2026

Mark Bratkovsky, Esq. from Law Offices of Mark Bratkovsky, P.C. participated virtually for the Applicant

Jeffrey Santos, Esq. from Sarah C. Varghese & Associates participated virtually for the Respondent

2. The amount claimed in the Arbitration Request, **\$2,467.04**, 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 34 year old EIP reported involvement in a motor vehicle accident on September 23, 2024; claimed related injury and underwent physical therapy treatment provided by the applicant from December 19, 2024 to January 15, 2025.

The applicant submitted a claim for these medical services, payment of which was timely denied by the respondent based on the IME of the EIP by Ajendra Sohal, M.D. which was performed on January 13, 2025. The IME cut-off was effective on February 13, 2025.

The respondent also asserted a fee schedule defense.

**The issues to be determined at the hearing are:**

**Whether the respondent established that the medical services provided by the applicant were 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 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.

To support a lack of medical necessity respondent must "set forth a factual basis and medical rationale for the IME doctor'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, 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> Dept. 2006.)

The Civil Courts have held that a defendant's peer review or medical evidence must set forth more than just a basic recitation of the expert's opinion. The trial courts have held that a peer review 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 medical practice as a medical rationale for his/her findings; and 3) the peer review report fails to provide 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.)

To support its contention that the medical services provided to the EIP were not medically necessary, the respondent relied upon the report of the independent medical examination of the EIP by Dr. Sohal, which was objectively negative and unremarkable. The report presents a factually sufficient, cogent medical rationale in support of respondent's lack of medical necessity defense. Dr. Sohal performed a complete and comprehensive examination of the EIP which did not identify any objective positive findings and determined that his injuries were resolved.

Based upon the physical examination and medical records reviewed, Dr. Sohal determined that despite his subjective complaints, there were no significant objective findings to support the EIP's subjective complaints of pain. EIP was not currently working and did not report that he missed any time from work as a result of the subject accident. It was Dr. Sohal's opinion that there was no medical necessity for further physical therapy, massage therapy, follow up evaluations, injections, prescription medication, diagnostic testing, durable medical equipment, household help or special transportation or other pain management intervention.

Respondent has factually demonstrated that the medical services at issue were not medically necessary. Accordingly, the burden now shifts to the applicant, who bears the ultimate burden of persuasion. See Bronx Expert Radiology, P.C. v. Travelers Ins. Co., 2006 NY Slip Op 52116 (App. Term 1 Dept. 2006.)

In response to the report of the physical examination of the EIP by Dr. Sohal the applicant relied upon the submissions, including an initial physical therapy evaluation of October 1, 2024 and progress notes from October 1, 2024 to May 12, 2025, initial chiropractic evaluation on October 7, 2024 and progress notes to October 11, 2024.

A review of the applicant's submissions reveals that it has not met the burden of persuasion in rebuttal. The medical records submitted in opposition to the findings of Dr. Sohal are insufficient to overcome the burden of production established by respondent.

Based on the foregoing, the respondent has established that the medical services at issue were not medically necessary.

Under these circumstances the fee schedule issue is moot.

**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.

07/28/2026  
(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:**  
1f671365873e0baa82c8d08510c974ae

### Electronically Signed

Your name: Anne Malone  
Signed on: 07/28/2026