



Hausner v. United HealthCare of Texas (American Arbitration Association)

Topics Covered: Payment Issues (for Physicians)

Outcome: Neutral

Issue

The issue in this class was whether in-network clinical pathologists could charge insurance companies for professional component services.

AMA Interest

The AMA advocates that third party payers provide appropriate coverage for plan oversight codes, such as codes used for billing professional component services. The AMA also believes that a professional fee should be paid directly to the appropriate physician for clinical laboratory work, regardless of payer source.

Case Summary

Richard J. Hausner, M.D. and Associates and Pathology Associates of San Antonio, L.L.P., included pathologists and participate in the United HealthCare of Texas provider panel. After United refused to pay their professional component pathology services, Hausner and Pathology Associates filed a class arbitration with the American Arbitration Association.

The claimants contended that United was obliged to pay for pathologists' professional component services as a "covered Health Service" under its standard participation contracts. The claimants sought compensatory damages for breach of contract, plus penalties, interest, and attorneys' fees under the Texas Prompt Pay Statute. They also sought a declaration that, going forward, United was obligated to pay for these services.

The pathologists asked the arbitration panel to certify the class status of the arbitration proceeding. However, the panel denied the pathologists' motion. The case ultimately settled.

AMA Involvement

The AMA CPT Department offered to provide expertise and/or testimony to assist the pathologists.