

Recovery & Resolution



Graham Lundberg & Peschel *Founded 1979*

A LEGAL NEWSLETTER FOR
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

Facet Joint Syndrome

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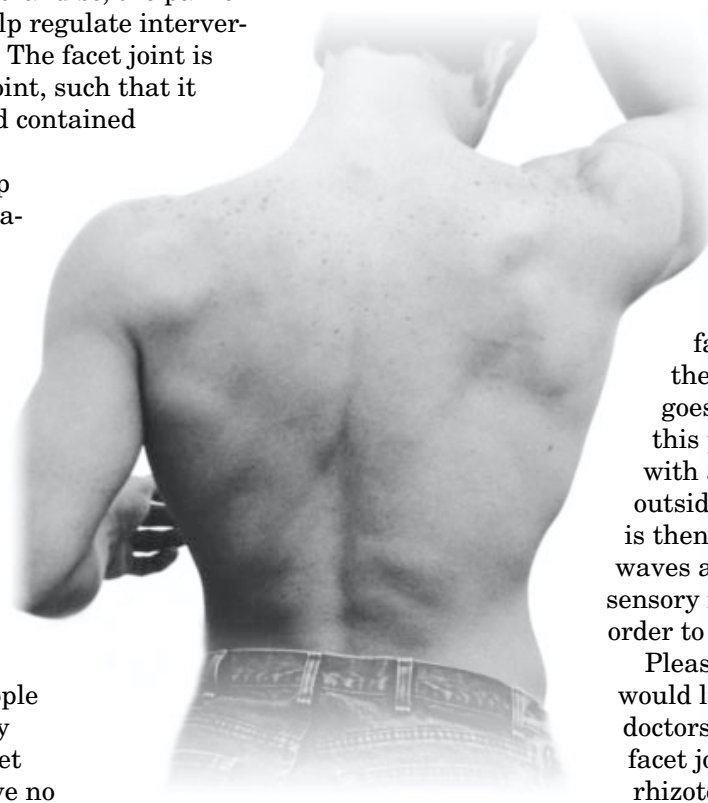
Some of our clients have recently been diagnosed and treated for Facet Joint Syndrome. Facet Syndrome is the painful condition in the back due to inflammation, or irritation of the facet joints. The facet joint is more formally called the Zygapophyseal or z-joint. The facet joints are a right-left pair of joints on the posterior aspect of the motion segment between two adjacent levels of vertebra. Along with the intervertebral disc, the pair of facet joints help regulate intervertebral motion. The facet joint is the synovial joint, such that it uses joint fluid contained within a joint capsule to help with its lubrication and nutrition.

When traditional pain medications fail, facet joint injections can be very effective in relieving the swelling as well as the back pain. Generally, people whose primary problem is facet joint pain, have no

problems with sitting or bending, but have pain with bending backwards because this increases the mechanical load on the facet joints. Also, standing for a long period of time increases back pain because the load gets transferred from the disc to the facet joint over time. Usually the pain comes on very quickly.

Facet joint injections are used to confirm that a facet joint is the source of pain and also to decrease pain and inflammation in a facet joint or multiple joints. When facet blocks provide only temporary relief, a facet rhizotomy may be recommended. The facet rhizotomy disables the sensory nerve that goes to the facet joint. In this procedure a needle with a probe is inserted just outside the joint. The probe is then heated with radio waves and applied to the sensory nerve to the joint in order to disable the nerve.

Please contact us if you would like names of medical doctors who are performing facet joint blocks and facet rhizotomys.



Plan to Attend Our Legal Educational Seminar...

Using the AMA Guidelines to Establish Permanent Impairments of Your Patients' Injuries.

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Top Ten List – HCFA Tips

Insurance companies and defense attorneys often question or challenge the validity of our client's bills because information has been incorrectly documented on the Health Insurance Claim forms (HCFA). We find that HCFA forms are more effective than ledger sheets as they provide all of the information needed for prompt payment of outstanding medical bills. Errors on the HCFA forms hinder payment of bills and can also hinder a client's ability to fully recover their medical expenses.

Below is a list of GLP's Top Ten HCFA Tips that can assist you and your office by ensuring that your HCFA forms are not questioned or challenged by an insurance company or defense attorney.

1. Patient identifiers, especially name and date of birth, need to be documented correctly. Although this seems to be an obvious point, it is the most important one because it is necessary to be able to show to whom the care was provided without any additional accompanying information.

2. The section that questions "Is patient's condition related to", should be marked "yes" next to the phrase "Auto Accident". We have

had some cases where the health care provider is questioned about the causation of the injuries because this box was not marked or the box next to "other accident" is marked.

3. The correct date of the automobile accident needs to be entered in the section that asks for the date of the current injury. Entering an incorrect date allows the insurance companies and their attorneys to raise questions about other accidents that may not have even occurred.

4. The diagnosis code(s) (ICD-9 codes) need to be properly and completely documented on the HCFA. Several insurance companies evaluate your bills for payment and evaluate the patient's claim based upon the results of the bill review. In order to complete the computer generated evaluations, the insurance companies input the ICD-9 codes into their software program. Accordingly, inaccurate ICD-9 codes could effect the evaluation of your bills by the insurance company and unnecessarily raise "red flags".

5. The correct dates of service need to be documented.

The most frequent problem we encounter is that the treatment records

do not correspond to the dates of service listed on the bills.

6. The CPT codes need to be properly documented on the HCFA forms. Similar to the ICD-9 codes, the insurance companies enter the CPT codes into their software programs to assist in determining the reasonableness and necessity of the bills and also ensure that the treatment and codes are appropriate. If the insurance adjuster does not have the complete and correct CPT codes then their evaluation and payment of the bills will be delayed and or inaccurate.

7. Charges need to be correct and consistent with charges previously billed. Any sudden increase in charges, without explanation, will likely be challenged!

8. Including your tax identification number ensures timely payment of your bill.

9. The name of the health care provider needs to be provided in the space that requires the physician's signature.

10. The correct name and billing address of the health care provider or clinic needs to be provided.

Not only do correct billing records assist you in obtaining timely payment of your services, but correct records also assist your patients in recovering the medical expenses they have incurred as a result of their injuries. Your assistance in providing correct billing records is always appreciated, and we are happy to help you in any way that we can.



Medical Lien Update

Due to Washington State's Legislative **Substitute House Bill 2060**, the expense of filing a medical lien, in every county, has risen. A \$10 surcharge was passed by the House of Representatives (65 Yeas and 31 Nays) and the Senate (29 Yeas and 16 Nays) in March and approved by the Governor in April 2002. This additional fee became effective on June 13. In the past, the cost of filing a lien varied from county to county. Now, throughout the state, a standard fee for filing medical liens is \$19 for the first page and \$1 for each additional

page, legal size or smaller.

The reason for the surcharge is to provide additional funding for housing projects. The passage of Substitute House Bill 2060 will assist, financially, in the development and preservation of affordable low-income housing, which has been recognized by the legislature as a significant problem for a large portion of society in many parts of Washington State in recent years.

We encourage you to continue to file medical liens. The possible complications you may encounter by not filing a lien far outweigh the cost of protecting your interests.

Here is a list of local county auditor phone numbers and Web sites for additional reference:

- King County – (206) 296-1570 or www.metrokc.gov/recelec/records/
- Kitsap County – (360) 337-7129 or www.kitsapgov.com/aud/default.htm
- Mason County – (360) 427-9670 or www.co.mason.wa.us/auditor/
- Pierce County – (253) 798-7427 or www.piercecountywa.org/pc/abtus/ourorg/aud/default.htm
- Skagit County – (360) 336-9311 or www.skagitcounty.net
- Snohomish County – (425) 388-3483 or www.co.snohomish.wa.us/auditor/ArecDiv.asp
- Thurston County – (360) 786-5224 or www.co.thurston.wa.us/auditor



FREE SEMINARS

Graham Lundberg & Peschel welcomes you and your office staff to attend a **FREE** Educational Seminar.

What You Need To Know About...

Using the AMA Guidelines...

to establish permanent impairments of your patients' injuries.

Thursday, **September 5**
Everett – Howard Johnson Hotel

Thursday, **September 12**
Bellevue – Best Western's Bellevue Inn

Wednesday, **September 18**
Tacoma – Cliff House Restaurant

Thursday, **September 19**
Federal Way – Best Western Executel

Thursday, **September 26**
Port Orchard – Tweten's Lighthouse

Thursday, **October 3**
Tukwila – Best Western of Southcenter

Wednesday, **October 9**
Puyallup – Best Western's Park Plaza

Wednesday, **October 16**
Lakewood – Lakewold Gardens

Enclosed is an RSVP form. Plan to attend this exciting and informative seminar.

- All Seminars: 12:30 – 2 pm
- Complimentary Lunch Will Be Served!
- This Seminar is for Doctors, Therapists and their Staff!
- Potential to Earn Continuing Education credit





We are a team of legal professionals working together to advocate for the injured while being recognized in the community for providing the highest level of service.

Our Attorneys

John Graham
 Scott F. Lundberg
 Brian J. Peschel
 Kenneth B. Golden
 Cydney Campbell Webster
 Sean Ayers
 Kenneth Barry Dore
 John Webber
 *John Williams
 Rodney G. Zerr
 Angela DeWig – Intern
 Tara Eubanks – Intern
 Brett Hill – Intern
 *admitted in Ohio only

Our Paralegals

Patricia Clanton
 Patti Cryder
 Kimberly Cutting
 Johnnie Dano
 Kathleen Gottlieb
 Judy Hanson
 Lora Harris
 Grace Stephens
 Heather Webb

Our Administration

Arlene Bolger
 Tamara Briggie

Administration, cont.

Diane Daniel
 Angie Fales
 Thelma James
 Brian Jones
 Heather Kelly
 Debbie Lee
 Martha McDonald
 Becky Moilanen
 Tina Mulcahy
 Lucinda Pieczatkowski
 Tom Reger
 April Stonebreaker
 Celine Vogler

CONVENIENTLY LOCATED

For the convenience of your personal injury patients, we offer several meeting locations throughout Puget Sound and Peninsula communities. Attorney consultations are encouraged and always free.

- Auburn 253-931-1111**
- Bellevue 425-827-1111**
- Burien 206-241-1708**
- Everett 425-252-1111**
- Federal Way . . 253-946-1111**
- Gig Harbor . . . 253-853-5005**
- Lakewood 253-274-1111**
- Lynnwood 425-775-1111**
- Marysville 360-658-1111**
- Port Orchard . 360-876-5005**
- Puyallup 253-845-1112**
- Renton 425-235-1111**
- Seattle 206-448-1992**
- Tacoma 253-627-7701**

Or Call Toll Free

North Puget Sound area including King & Snohomish Counties
800-422-4610

South Puget Sound area including Pierce, Kitsap & Thurston Counties
800-273-5005

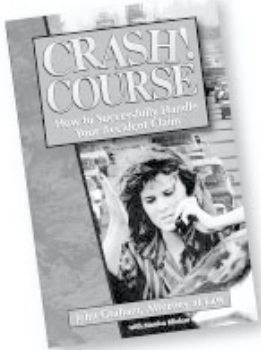
or visit us online...
www.glpattorneys.com

Are Your Patients Asking Questions About Their Recent Accident And You Don't Know Where To Turn For Help?

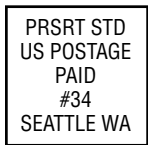
YOUR PATIENTS NEED...

Crash! Course

By John Graham
How to Successfully Handle Your Accident Claim



Call our office for your complimentary copy at (800) 422-4610



500 John Street
 Seattle WA 98109