



November 27, 2017

Josiah Morse, MPH, Program Director  
Washington State Healthcare Authority  
Health Technology Assessment Program  
P.O. Box 42712  
Olympia, WA 98504-2712

**SUBJECT: Washington State HTA Key Questions for Review of Surgery for Symptomatic Lumbar Radiculopathy**

Dear Mr. Morse:

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS), American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), AANS/CNS Joint Section on Disorders of the Spine and Peripheral Nerves (DSPN), Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), International Society for the Advancement of Spine Surgery (ISASS), North American Spine Society (NASS) and the Washington State Association of Neurological Surgeons (WSANS) appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft key questions for consideration of surgery for symptomatic lumbar radiculopathy.

We have attached a document presenting the consensus views of our organizations on each of the draft key questions and including a robust review of the relevant literature. We must reiterate our view that spine surgery seems to have been disproportionately selected as a review topic by the Health Technology Assessment Program. Collectively, our organizations do not agree with the need to review surgery for symptomatic lumbar radiculopathy at this time. The surgical treatment of lumbar radiculopathy in patients refractory to nonoperative measures or with a neurological deficit has been the standard of care for decades. We hope that the review will be based on the strength of the evidence and availability of care in the state of Washington. Our organizations are concerned that some past decisions regarding spine care were based on studies conducted outside the United States and thus not relevant to the population covered by the programs in the purview of the Washington State Health Care Authority — resulting in fewer effective treatment options for those patients.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments.

Sincerely,  
American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons  
American Association of Neurological Surgeons  
AANS/CNS Section on Disorders of the Spine and Peripheral Nerves  
Congress of Neurological Surgeons  
International Society for the Advancement of Spine Surgery  
North American Spine Society  
Washington State Association of Neurological Surgeons

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