

Case Number:	CM13-0034924		
Date Assigned:	12/11/2013	Date of Injury:	11/25/2009
Decision Date:	02/10/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/04/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/15/2013

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to a physician reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The physician reviewer is Board Certified in Orthopedic Surgery and is licensed to practice in California. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The physician reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

The claimant is a 41-year-old female who was injured in a work related accident on November 25, 2009. Specific to the claimant's cervical spine, there is documentation that she has failed conservative care, is with both MRI scan and electrodiagnostic evidence of radiculopathy and that based on failed conservative measures, a surgical intervention had been supported in the form of a C5 through 7 anterior cervical discectomy and fusion with hardware. Specific to the claimant's surgical process which stated has been approved, there are formal requests at present for the role of a three day inpatient length of stay, the purchase of a Minerva mini collar, as well as a Miami J collar with a thoracic extension for purchase as well. Further clinical records in this case are not pertinent to the questions at hand.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

A two to three day postoperative inpatient hospital stay: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Hospital Length of Stay.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, Neck Procedures, Length of Stay

Decision rationale: California MTUS Guidelines are silent. When looking at Official Disability Guidelines, the role of a two to three day inpatient length of stay would not be indicated. Official Disability Guideline criteria regarding anterior cervical discectomy and fusion regardless of number of levels being performed indicates the Best Target Practice without complications would be a one day inpatient stay. Given the claimant's medical history and review of records, there would be nothing indicating a three day length of stay given the surgical process in question.

A Miami J collar with thoracic extension: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, Collars

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 175.

Decision rationale: Based on California ACOEM Guidelines, the role of cervical collar in this case would not be indicated. California Guidelines do not recommend the role of cervical collars for more one to two days during the acute setting with no documentation of lasting benefit. Specific to this case, there would be nothing indicating a modified collar with thoracic extension given the nature of the surgical process in question.

A Minerva mini-collar: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, Collars

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 175.

Decision rationale: Based on California ACOEM Guidelines, a Minerva mini-collar also would not be indicated. As stated above, there is nothing indicating lasting benefit or significant improvement with chronic use of collars in the acute or chronic stage of care for cervical injuries including surgical processes. The role of this "mini" collar to the claimant's cervical spine given the claimant's clinical presentation would not be indicated.