

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM13-0056753		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	12/30/2013	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	10/21/2004
<b>Decision Date:</b>	06/10/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	11/11/2013
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	11/22/2013

### HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, has a subspecialty in Interventional Spine 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 expert 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 patient is a 67 year old female with date of injury of 10/21/2004. The listed diagnoses dated 08/04/2014 are: Severe back pain and Right lumbar radiculopathy secondary to disc disease & facet arthritis. According to the report, the patient complains of severe back pain with stiffness. She also complains of some right sharp pain in the buttocks radiating to the right toes. The exam shows tenderness in the paraspinous muscles and facet joints in the back. There is also intervertebral disc tenderness noted. No changes to the sensory and motor exams. The utilization review denied the request on 11/11/2013.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

#### **ONE LEFT L3-L4, L4-L5 AND L5-S1 FACET BLOCK INJECTION UNDER FLUOROSCOPY: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300 and 301. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Lumbar Facet joint signs & symptoms

**Decision rationale:** The patient presents with chronic back pain. The treater is requesting one left L3-L4, L4-L5 and L5-S1 facet block injection under fluoroscopy. The ACOEM guidelines do not support facet joint injections. ODG guidelines discuss facet joint injections or blocks for facet "mediated" pain but limits it to no more than two levels and for lateralized back pain without radicular symptoms. Facet injections are allowed primarily for diagnostic purposes. In this patient, the patient has right sided back pain but also has radicular symptoms into the toe. Furthermore, three level injections are requested. Recommendation is for denial.

**ONE RIGHT L3-L4, L4-L5 AND L5-S1 FACET BLOCK INJECTION UNDER FLUOROSCOPY:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300 and 301.

**Decision rationale:** The patient presents with chronic back pain. The treater is requesting one right L3-L4, L4-L5 and L5-S1 facet block injection under fluoroscopy. The ACOEM guidelines do not support facet joint injections. ODG guidelines discuss facet joint injections or blocks for facet "mediated" pain but limits it to no more than two levels and for lateralized back pain without radicular symptoms. Facet injections are allowed primarily for diagnostic purposes. In this patient, the patient has right sided back pain but also has radicular symptoms into the toe. Furthermore, three level injections are requested. Recommendation is for denial.