

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM13-0063915		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	12/30/2013	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/27/2010
<b>Decision Date:</b>	04/14/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	11/08/2013
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	12/10/2013

### 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, 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 58-year-old who sustained an unspecified injury on 04/27/2010. The patient was evaluated on 09/30/2013 which indicated the patient had previously undergone a selective nerve root block to the bilateral C6 on 08/13/2013 and 08/22/2013 to his bilateral C5. The documentation indicated the patient only minimally improved in his pain per his pain diary and remained at 5/10 which was his preoperative pain level. Physical examination findings upon that day indicated the patient had a positive straight leg raise bilaterally as well as a positive Faber and positive thigh thrust examination bilaterally. The documentation further indicated the patient had positive Fortin's sign bilaterally over his sacroiliac joint area. The patient was re-evaluated on 10/29/2013 for chronic cervical and low back pain. The documentation indicated the patient had persistent neck and decreased range of motion with muscle spasms that made it difficult for him to drive, complete his activities of daily living due to severe limitations in his ability to move his head. The documentation further indicated the patient had decreased range of motion and tenderness to palpation over the bilateral facets joints at C4-5 and C5-6 worsening and most severe levels, and C3-4 and C6-7 were not as severe. The treatment plan indicated due to the physical examination findings the patient would be receiving trigger point injections.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Cervical medial branch blocks C4-5 and C5-6:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM), 2004

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 181-183. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM), 2nd Edition, (2004)

**Decision rationale:** The request for cervical medial branch blocks C4-5 and C5-6 is non-certified. ACOEM does not recommend the use of facet injections of corticosteroids for patients with neck and upper back complaints. The documentation submitted for review indicated the patient had radicular symptoms upon evaluation on 09/30/2013. Furthermore, upon re-evaluation on 10/29/2013, the patient's pain level was not noted using the visual analog scale or another numerical scale. As the guidelines did not recommend the use of facet joint nerve blocks for patients with neck and upper back complaints, the use of the injections is not supported. Given the information submitted for review, the request for cervical medial branch blocks C4-5 and C5-6 is non-certified.