

Case Number:	CM14-0001257		
Date Assigned:	01/22/2014	Date of Injury:	02/25/2013
Decision Date:	06/11/2014	UR Denial Date:	12/06/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/03/2014

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 Pain Management 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 presented with a date of injury of 2/25/13. A utilization review determination dated 12/6/13 recommends non-certification of physical therapy. The patient was noted to have completed 25 physical therapy sessions for the lumbar spine. 11/8/13 medical report identifies increased low back stiffness with acupuncture helping momentarily. The patient would like to try physiotherapy. Exam findings are minimal and mostly illegible.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR THE LUMBAR SPINE TWICE A WEEK FOR FOUR WEEKS: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Therapy.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98-99.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for physical therapy, California MTUS cites that "patients are instructed and expected to continue active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement levels." Within the documentation available for review, there is documentation of completion of 25 prior physical therapy sessions, but there

is no documentation of specific objective functional improvement with the previous sessions and remaining deficits that cannot be addressed within the context of an independent home exercise program. Furthermore, the California MTUS supports only up to 10 physical therapy sessions for this injury. The request for physical therapy on the lumbar spine, twice a week for four weeks is not medically necessary and appropriate.