

Case Number:	CM14-0101529		
Date Assigned:	08/04/2014	Date of Injury:	02/15/2012
Decision Date:	10/02/2014	UR Denial Date:	07/01/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/01/2014

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:

This is a patient with a date of injury of 2/15/12. A utilization review determination dated 7/1/14 recommends non-certification of aquatic therapy. 6/18/14 medical report identifies low back pain with pain down the right heel and occasionally to the left knee. She is s/p lumbar fusion 3/23/13. She had PT from 5/14/14 to 6/14/14, "which started to help her with aquatic therapy." She also had ESI "in the beginning." On exam, there is limited ROM. Strength was 3+/5 on the RLE due to significant guarding and pain give way. Recommendations included additional aquatic therapy, EDS, and medications.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Additional Aquatic Therapy 1x6 to the Lumbar Spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aquatic Therapy Page(s): Page 22.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines 8 C.C.R. 9792.20 - 9792.26 MTUS (Effective July 18, 2009) Page(s): 22, 98-99.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for aquatic therapy, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines state that up to 10 sessions of aquatic therapy are recommended as an optional form of exercise therapy where available as an alternative to land-based physical therapy. They go on

to state that it is specifically recommended whenever reduced weight bearing is desirable, for example extreme obesity. Within the documentation available for review, there is no documentation indicating why the patient would require therapy in a reduced weight-bearing environment rather than land-based PT and/or independent home exercise. Furthermore, there is no indication as to what specific objective functional improvement has been obtained with the therapy sessions already provided. Finally, the total amount of therapy appears to exceed the recommendations of the CA MTUS and, unfortunately, there is no provision for modification of the current request. In light of the above issues, the currently requested aquatic therapy is not medically necessary.