

Case Number:	CM14-0103019		
Date Assigned:	07/30/2014	Date of Injury:	03/26/2008
Decision Date:	08/29/2014	UR Denial Date:	06/26/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/03/2014

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 Anesthesiology, 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 55-year-old female with a 3/26/08 date of injury. At the time (6/10/14) of request for authorization for Hot/cold unit per day post procedure #30, there is documentation of subjective (low back pain) and objective (tenderness, tightness, and spasm over the paraspinal musculature; and decreased lumbar spine range of motion) findings, current diagnoses (lumbar discopathy, lumbar radiculopathy, lumbar facet syndrome, and right sacroiliac joint pain), and treatment to date (medial branch block and medications). Medical report identifies a request for bilateral L4 through S1 medial branch facet joint rhizotomy/neurolysis and hot/cold unit for 30 days post procedure. In addition, medical reports identify a pending bilateral L4 through S1 medial branch facet joint rhizotomy/neurolysis that has been authorized/certified.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Hot/cold unit per day post procedure #30: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 560.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 308. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low

Back, Cold/heat packs Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: PMID: 18214217 PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE.

Decision rationale: MTUS reference to ACOEM guidelines identifies at-home applications of local heat or cold to the low back as an optional clinical measure for evaluation and management of low back complaints. ODG identifies that there is minimal evidence supporting the use of cold therapy. Medical Treatment Guideline identifies that exact recommendations on application, for postoperative cold therapy utilization following lumbar spine surgery, on time and temperature cannot be given. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Hot/cold unit per day post procedure #30 is not medically necessary.