

Case Number:	CM14-0104769		
Date Assigned:	08/08/2014	Date of Injury:	02/24/2012
Decision Date:	09/22/2014	UR Denial Date:	06/30/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/08/2014

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 Family Medicine 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:

61 yr. old female claimant sustained a work injury on 2/24/12 involving the low back. She was diagnosed with multi-level degenerative changes of the lumbar spine and severe canal stenosis. The claimant had used oral analgesics for pain relief. A progress note on 6/13/14 noted that the claimant had 8/10 back pain with reduced range of motion and pain in the paravertebral region. The physician requested an epidural steroid injection of the L5-S1 region.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Bilateral L5- S1 Lumbar Epidural Steroid Injection: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural Steroid Injection Page(s): 46.

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

Decision rationale: According to the ACOEM guidelines, epidural steroid injections are not recommended. Invasive techniques are of questionable merit. Epidural steroid injections may provide short-term improvement for nerve root compression due to a herniated nucleus pulposus. The treatments do not provide any long-term functional benefit or reduce the need for surgery. The request for an epidural steroid injection therefore is not medically necessary.

