

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0111614		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/16/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	02/05/2002
<b>Decision Date:</b>	11/19/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	06/20/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	07/17/2014

### 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 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 46-year-old female with a 2/5/02 date of injury. At the time (5/12/14) of the request for authorization for MRI of the lumbar spine, there is documentation of subjective (constant back pain, tingling and numbness in her legs, she cannot stand up straight) and objective (tender to palpation over the lower lumbar region, left foot is 4/5 in dorsiflexion and 4+/5 in plantar flexion, right foot is 4+/5 in dorsiflexion and 5/5 in plantarflexion, knee extension and flexion are 4+/5 bilaterally, decreased sensation to pinwheel over both feet) findings, current diagnoses (chronic low back with referred pain into the left leg), and treatment to date (therapy and medication). There is no documentation that plain film radiographs are negative and consideration for surgery.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**MRI of the lumbar spine:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 303-305. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Treatment Index, 11th Edition (web), 2013, Low Back/MRIs (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 303-304;. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low Back Chapter, MRIs (magnetic resonance imaging)

**Decision rationale:** The MTUS/ACOEM guidelines identifies documentation of red flag diagnoses where plain film radiographs are negative; objective findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination, failure of conservative treatment, and who are considered for surgery, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of MRI. The Official Disability Guidelines identify documentation of a condition/diagnosis (with supportive subjective/objective findings) for which an MRI is indicated (such as: lumbar spine trauma, uncomplicated low back pain [suspicion of cancer, infection, radiculopathy after at least 1 month conservative therapy, prior lumbar surgery or cauda equina syndrome], or myelopathy), as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of a lumbar spine MRI. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of chronic low back with referred pain into the left leg. In addition, there is documentation of objective findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination and failure of conservative treatment. In addition, there is documentation of objective findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination and failure of conservative treatment. However, there is no documentation that plain film radiographs are negative and consideration for surgery. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for MRI of the lumbar spine is not medically necessary.