

Case Number:	CM14-0125376		
Date Assigned:	08/11/2014	Date of Injury:	01/08/1997
Decision Date:	10/16/2014	UR Denial Date:	07/17/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/07/2014

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 January 8, 1987. A utilization review determination dated July 17, 2014 recommends noncertification for a tens unit. A progress report dated April 24, 2014 identifies subjective complaints including "the patient remains symptomatic." Physical examination findings reveal a well-healed lumbar spine incision with limited lumbar range of motion and positive straight leg raise. Additionally, there is diminished sensation in the L5-S1 distribution in the lower extremities. Diagnosis is status post lumbar spine surgery. The treatment plan recommends consultation with a spine specialist, medical therapeutic massage, a home exercise program, and tens unit supplies.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TENS unit Supplied of Electrodes and Patch rental for 3-6 months: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 116.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 114-117 of 127.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for TENS unit Supplied of Electrodes and Patch rental for 3-6 months, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that transcutaneous

electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) is not recommended as a primary treatment modality, but a one-month home-based TENS trial may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option if used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration. Guidelines recommend failure of other appropriate pain modalities including medications prior to a TENS unit trial. Prior to TENS unit purchase, one month trial should be documented as an adjunct to ongoing treatment modalities within a functional restoration approach, with documentation of how often the unit was used, as well as outcomes in terms of pain relief and function. Within the documentation available for review, there is no indication that the patient has undergone a TENS unit trial, and no documentation of any specific objective functional deficits which a tens unit trial would be intended to address. Additionally, it is unclear what other treatment modalities are currently being used within a functional restoration approach. In the absence of clarity regarding those issues, the currently requested TENS unit Supplied of Electrodes and Patch rental for 3-6 months unit is not medically necessary.