

Case Number:	CM14-0136740		
Date Assigned:	09/03/2014	Date of Injury:	06/02/2013
Decision Date:	11/03/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/08/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/25/2014

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 Orthopedic Spine Surgeon, and is licensed to practice in Texas. 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:

The injured worker is a 29-year-old male who reported injury on 06/12/2013. The mechanism of injury was the injured worker was selecting an item and placing it on his pallet and felt pain in his low back on the left side. Prior treatments included chiropractic care, physical therapy and acupuncture. The injured worker underwent x-rays and an MRI. There were noted to be no surgeries. The injured worker's medications included ibuprofen 400 mg 1 as needed. There was no Request for Authorization submitted for the requested intervention. The documentation of 07/26/2014 revealed the injured worker had severe mechanical axial back pain with left leg radiculopathies including pain, numbness and tingling going down the posterior portion of the left leg all the way down to the foot and underneath the foot. The injured worker was noted to have undergone physical therapy, acupuncture, medication management and chiropractic manipulation and did not feel improvement in overall symptomologies. Physical examination revealed the injured worker ambulated slowly with a wide based gait. The strength examination was 5/5 bilaterally with the exception of the gastrocnemius muscles which were 5-/5 on the left. The light touch to sensation was diminished in the left L5-S1 dermatomal distributions. Reflexes were 2+ throughout. The diagnoses included L5-S1 disc herniation with significant bilateral foraminal stenosis and nerve compression, annular tear at L5-S1 and significant disc deterioration, loss of disc height and loss of T2 signal hyperintensity at L5-S1. The treatment plan included the injured worker had undergone extensive conservative care, physical therapy, acupuncture, and medication management and the physician opined the injured worker would be a good candidate for aqua therapy. There was no Request for Authorization submitted to support the request.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Aqua Therapy 2 Times A Week For 6 Weeks Lumbar Spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aquatic Therapy and Physical Medicine Guidelines Page(s): 22 and 2. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines - Low Back / Physical Therapy

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aquatic Therapy, Physical Medicine Page(s): 22,98,99.

Decision rationale: The California MTUS Guidelines recommend aquatic therapy when there is a necessity for reduced weight bearing. The quantity of sessions are up to 10 visits for radiculopathy. The request for 12 sessions would be excessive. There was a lack of documentation indicating the injured worker had a necessity for reduced weight bearing. Given the above, the request for Aqua Therapy 2 Times A Week For 6 Weeks Lumbar Spine is not medically necessary.