

Case Number:	CM14-0138328		
Date Assigned:	09/05/2014	Date of Injury:	08/07/2013
Decision Date:	10/28/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/15/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/26/2014

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 Occupational 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:

The MTUS are silent on diagnostic medial branch blocks. The ODG notes: 1. Limited to patients with low-back pain that is non-radicular and at no more than two levels bilaterally. 2. There is documentation of failure of conservative treatment (including home exercise, PT and NSAIDs) prior to the procedure for at least 4-6 weeks. 3. Diagnostic facet blocks should not be performed in patients in whom a surgical procedure is anticipated. I was not able to verify what the patient's surgical planning status was, as a key missing criterion. Therefore, this request is not medically necessary.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Dorsal medial branch diagnostic blocks to the left L3, L4, L5: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Low Back (updated 07/03/14), Facet Joint Diagnostic Blocks (injections)

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG

Decision rationale: The MTUS are silent on diagnostic medial branch blocks. The ODG notes: 1. Limited to patients with low-back pain that is non-radicular and at no more than two

levels bilaterally.2. There is documentation of failure of conservative treatment (including home exercise, PT and NSAIDs) prior to the procedure for at least 4-6 weeks.3. Diagnostic facet blocks should not be performed in patients in whom a surgical procedure is anticipated. I was not able to verify what the patient's surgical planning status was, as a key missing criterion. Therefore, this request is not medically necessary.