

Case Number:	CM14-0147171		
Date Assigned:	09/15/2014	Date of Injury:	07/19/2014
Decision Date:	11/05/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/03/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/10/2014

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 & Rehabilitation, 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 injured worker is a 32-year-old male who reported an injury on 07/19/2014. The mechanism of injury reportedly occurred when he was lifting a piece of furniture. His diagnoses included sprain of the lumbosacral spine and sciatica. His treatment consisted of a home exercise program, chiropractic treatment, and medication. His diagnostics included an MRI of the lumbar spine. His previous surgeries were not specified. On 08/11/2014 the injured worker reported that he continued with back pain. The physical examination revealed tenderness to palpation of the lumbar spine. His medications were Norco, Tylenol No. 3, and Norflex. The treatment plan was for a TENS unit 3 to 6 month rental. The rationale for the request was not specified. The Request for Authorization form was submitted on 08/18/2014.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TENS unit 3-6 months rental: 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 08/22/14

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines TENS, chronic pain (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) Page(s): 114-116.

Decision rationale: Based on the clinical information submitted for review, the request for a TENS unit 3 to 6 month rental is not medically necessary. According to the California MTUS Guidelines, cutaneous electrical nerve stimulation is not recommended as a primary treatment modality. A 1 month home based TENS trial may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option if it is used as an adjunct to a program of evidence based functional restoration. It was noted that the injured worker was using a TENS unit along with receiving chiropractic therapy, in which 1 chiropractic treatment note specified that his pain and spasms had decreased with treatment of a TENS unit. However, chiropractic treatment was stopped after 4 out of 6 visits were attended due to a lack of improvement being made, and there was no further documentation in regard to how the TENS unit was beneficial to his functional improvement or pain. The criteria for the use of a TENS unit requires documentation of pain of at least 3 months of duration and evidence that other appropriate pain modalities have been tried to include medications and failed. The only pain modality that was noted to have failed was chiropractic treatment. Furthermore, there was a lack of documentation that showed how often the unit was used as well as outcomes in pain relief and function. It was unclear as to what benefit the TENS unit had to the injured worker as there was a lack of objective documentation to suggest improvement in his condition. As such, the request for a TENS unit 3 to 6 month rental is not medically necessary.