

Case Number:	CM14-0150531		
Date Assigned:	09/18/2014	Date of Injury:	03/03/2008
Decision Date:	11/13/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/02/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/16/2014

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 Family Medicine and is licensed to practice in Arizona. 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 patient is a 52-year-old male with a date of injury on 3/3/2008. The patient has the diagnosis of degenerative disc disease of the lumbar spine, and is status post lumbar spine surgery on 1/18/2014. Subjective complaints are of moderate low back pain with right lower extremity radicular symptoms. Physical exam showed healing surgical scars, tenderness over paraspinous muscles, normal motor strength, and slight sensory abnormalities. The patient had completed two weeks of aquatic therapy that worsen low back pain.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Aquatic therapy x12 sessions: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aquatic therapy.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aquatic Therapy Page(s): 22. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Physical Therapy, Aquatic Therapy

Decision rationale: CA MTUS recommends aquatic therapy as an alternative to land based therapy specifically if reduced weight bearing is desirable, for example extreme obesity. The ODG recommends aquatic therapy as an optional form of exercise therapy, where available, as

an alternative to land-based physical therapy. Aquatic therapy (including swimming) can minimize the effects of gravity, so it is specifically recommended where reduced weight bearing is desirable, for example extreme obesity. For this patient, there is no evidence of extreme obesity or presented rationale why land based exercise or therapy was not sufficient. Furthermore, the patient had previously failed to gain benefit from aquatic therapy. Therefore, the medical necessity of aquatic therapy is not established.