

Case Number:	CM14-0156182		
Date Assigned:	09/25/2014	Date of Injury:	07/16/2014
Decision Date:	12/02/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/28/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/23/2014

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 a licensed Chiropractor & Acupuncturist 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 40 year old male who reported low back pain from injury sustained on 07/16/14 due to cumulative trauma of offloading heavy metal racks, metal poles and shelves from a trailer. X-rays of lumbar spine revealed decreased disc height at L5-S1. Patient is diagnosed with lumbar strain with bilateral radiculitis and thoracic strain which is resolved. Patient has been treated with medication. Per medical notes dated 08/12/14, patient complains of frequent to intermittent severe pain, stiffness and soreness of low back. Pain radiated to the mid back frequently and to bilateral buttock at time. Examination revealed decreased range of motion of the lumbar spine with tenderness to palpation. Provider requested initial trial of 12 chiropractic sessions. Requested visits exceed the quantity supported by cited guidelines. Per guidelines 4-6 treatments are supported for initial course of chiropractic care with evidence of functional improvement prior to consideration of additional care.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Chiropractic Treatments - 12 Visits (Lumbar Spine): Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Manual Therapy and Manipulation Page(s): 58-59.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS- Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guideline - Manual therapy and manipulation page 58-59 "recommended for chronic pain if caused by musculoskeletal conditions. Manual therapy is widely used in the treatment of musculoskeletal pain. The intended goal or effect of manual medicine is the achievement of positive symptomatic or objectively measureable gain in functional improvement that facilitates progression in the patient's therapeutic exercise program and return to productive activities". Low Back: Recommended as an option. Therapeutic care- trial of 6 visits over 2 weeks, with evidence of objective functional improvement, total of up to 18 visits over 6-8 weeks. Elective/ maintenance care- not medically necessary. Reoccurrences/ flare-ups- need to re-evaluate treatment success, if RTW achieved then 1-2 visits every 4-6 months. Treatment parameters from state guidelines. A) Time of procedure effect: 4-6 treatments. B) Frequency 1-2 times per week the first 2 weeks as indicated by the severity of the condition. Treatment may continue at 1 treatment per week for the next 6 weeks. C) Maximum duration: 8 weeks. At 8 weeks patient should be re-evaluated. Care beyond 8 weeks may be indicated for certain chronic pain patients in whom manipulation has been helpful in improving function, decreasing pain and improving quality of life. Treatment beyond 4-6 visits should be documented with objective improvement in function". Patient has not had prior chiropractic treatments. Provider requested initial trial of 12 chiropractic sessions. Requested visits exceed the quantity supported by cited guidelines. Per guidelines 4-6 treatments are supported for initial course of chiropractic care with evidence of functional improvement prior to consideration of additional care. Additional visits may be rendered if the patient has documented objective functional improvement. MTUS- Definition 9792.20 (f) Functional improvement means either a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions as measured during the history and physical exam. Per review of evidence and guidelines, 2x6 Chiropractic visits are not medically necessary.