

Case Number:	CM14-0172651		
Date Assigned:	10/23/2014	Date of Injury:	06/23/1993
Decision Date:	12/18/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/25/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/20/2014

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 and Rehabilitation, has a subspecialty in Neuromuscular Medicine and is licensed to practice in Maryland. 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 71 year old who had a work injury dated 6/23/93. The diagnoses include cervical syndrome, migraines. Under consideration are requests for TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) unit to include electrodes and pads. There is a 7/16/14 progress note that states that the patient is in the middle of migraine today. He is having a bit more neck pain as time goes on. He has used a TENS unit successfully to manage the muscle tension and pain that lead to these migraines. Unfortunately his TENS unit stopped functioning about a year ago. Since he obviously improved his pain and decreased the headaches non-pharmacologically, the provider documents that it is reasonable to request a replacement TENS unit dual pad. It should be noted again that the patient has been tapered off the Fentanyl completely many months ago and has not used Hydrocodone except once or twice in the last couple of months. He would like to avoid medications as much as possible. Sumatriptan is the only medication that will relieve his headache pains once it started. Increasing muscle tension in the neck and trapezius region are triggers for his migraines. His meds include Hydrocodone/acetaminophen; Baclofen; Sumatriptan. On exam his motor bulk and tone grossly normal. His sensation is intact to light touch. There is decreased range of motion in all planes. His bilateral trapezius and infrascapular pain to light palpation. The treatment plan includes a request for request replacement TENS unit, dual pad.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) unit to include electrodes and pads:
Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Transcutaneous electrotherapy Page(s): 114-117.

Decision rationale: TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) unit to include electrodes and pads is not medically necessary per the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines. The guidelines state that a one-month trial period of the TENS unit should be documented (as an adjunct to ongoing treatment modalities within a functional restoration approach) with documentation of how often the unit was used, as well as outcomes in terms of pain relief and function. The guidelines state that a TENS unit can be used for neuropathic pain; CRPS; MS; spasticity; and phantom limb pain. The documentation indicates the patient has had a prior TENS unit however there is no documentation of the outcomes of this use, or functional improvement with prior use. The request for TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) unit to include electrodes and pads is not medically necessary.