

Case Number:	CM14-0174929		
Date Assigned:	10/28/2014	Date of Injury:	01/17/2013
Decision Date:	12/04/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/17/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/22/2014

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 Neurology, has a subspecialty in Neuromuscular Medicine and is licensed to practice in New Jersey. 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 58-year-old woman who sustained a work-related injury on January 17, 2013. Subsequently, she developed chronic neck and back pain. According to a progress report dated on August 5, 2014, the patient reported to continuous neck and back pain with a severity rated between 7-8/10. The pain radiated to both arms and lower extremities. Her physical examination demonstrated the lumbar and cervical tenderness with reduced range of motion, and decreased light touch in both upper extremities. The patient MRI of the cervical spine performed on February 25, 2013 demonstrated degenerative disc disease. The patient was diagnosed with the cervical radiculopathy. The provider requested authorization for cervical epidural injection.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Cervical Epidural Steroid Injection, Lumbar Spine, Cervical Spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural Steroid Injections Page(s): 46.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 181.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, cervical epidural corticosteroid injections are of uncertain benefit and should be reserved for patients who otherwise would undergo open

surgical procedures for nerve root compromise. Epidural steroid injection is optional for radicular pain to avoid surgery. It may offer short term benefit, however there is no significant long term benefit or reduction for the need of surgery. Furthermore, the patient file does not document that the patient is candidate for surgery. In addition, there is no clinical and objective documentation of radiculopathy. MTUS guidelines does not recommend epidural injections for neck pain without radiculopathy. Therefore, the request for cervical epidural steroid injection is not medically necessary.