

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0183569		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	11/10/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	09/12/1991
<b>Decision Date:</b>	12/30/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	10/11/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	11/05/2014

### 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 Occupational Medicine 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:

This is a 72-year-old female with a 9/12/91 date of injury, which occurred when she injured her low back. The patient was seen on 8/26/14 with complaints of low back pain and stiffness, and intermittent neck pain. Exam findings revealed slight tenderness in the lower lumbar paravertebral musculature, intact strength in the lower extremities and negative straight leg raise test. The progress notes indicated that the patient reported continued pain relief and functional improvement with aqua-Pilates. The diagnosis is multilevel herniated nucleus pulposus of the lumbar spine. Treatment to date includes work restrictions, aqua-Pilates and medications. An adverse determination was received on 10/11/14 given that the patient has been authorized for total of 68 sessions of aqua-pilates in the past and that 24 sessions would be excessive. The request for 24 Aquatic Pilates sessions was modified to 8 sessions to transition into self-directed care.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**24 Aquatic Pilates sessions:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Guidelines. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Low Back-Lumbar & Thoracic (Acute & Chronic)

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aqua Therapy Page(s): 22. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low Back Chapter: Yoga

**Decision rationale:** The California MTUS and Official Disability Guidelines do not specifically address aqua-Pilates. The California MTUS states that aquatic therapy is recommended as an optional form of exercise therapy, where available, as an alternative to land-based physical therapy when reduced weight bearing is indicated, such as with extreme obesity. In addition, Official Disability Guidelines states that yoga (Pilates) is recommended as an option only for select highly motivated patients. There is some evidence of efficacy for mind-body therapies such as yoga in the treatment of chronic low back pain. The reviewer's notes indicated that the patient has been authorized for total of 68 sessions of aqua-Pilates in the past and had functional gains' from the treatment. However, given that the patient's injury was over 20 years ago, it is not clear why the patient cannot transition into an independent home exercise program. In addition, there is a lack of documentation indicating that the patient could not attend land-based exercises. There is no discussion with regards to the new goals for the patient from aqua-Pilates. Lastly, the UR decision dated 10/11/14 modified the request and certified 8 sessions of aqua-Pilates for the patient to transition into self-directed care. Therefore, the request for 24 Aquatic Pilates sessions is not medically necessary.