

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0025834		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	06/13/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	09/19/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	07/15/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	01/28/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	02/28/2014

### 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 & Rehabilitation 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 54-year-old female with a 9/19/12 date of injury. At the time (12/2/13) of request for authorization for MRI lumbar spine/requested TX/SVS, there is documentation of subjective (headaches, low back pain radiating to the bilateral hips, knees, ankles and feet with numbness and tingling) and objective (tenderness to palpation over the bilateral L5-S1, bilateral sciatic notch, posterior thighs, calves, and feet; and decreased lumbar range of motion) findings, imaging findings (MRI of the lumbar spine (10/4/12) report revealed a 3 mm disc bulge at L2-3, L4-5 and L5-S1 with mild central canal stenosis at L5-S1; and a 3.5 mm disc bulge at L1-2), current diagnoses (lumbar strain with disc bulge and stenosis), and treatment to date (physical therapy, aquatic therapy, acupuncture, and medications). There is no documentation of objective findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination and a condition/diagnosis for which a repeat study is indicated (to diagnose a change in the patient's condition marked by new or altered physical findings).

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**MRI LUMBAR SPINE/REQUESTED TX/SVS:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 303-304. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guidelines: Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Minnesota Rules, 5221.6100 Parameters for Medical Imaging.

**Decision rationale:** MTUS reference to ACOEM guidelines identifies documentation of red flag diagnoses where plain film radiographs are negative; objective findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination, failure of conservative treatment, and who are considered for surgery, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of MRI. ODG identifies documentation of a diagnosis/condition (with supportive subjective/objective findings) for which a repeat study is indicated (such as: To diagnose a suspected fracture or suspected dislocation, to monitor a therapy or treatment which is known to result in a change in imaging findings and imaging of these changes are necessary to determine the efficacy of the therapy or treatment (repeat imaging is not appropriate solely to determine the efficacy of physical therapy or chiropractic treatment), to follow up a surgical procedure, to diagnose a change in the patient's condition marked by new or altered physical findings) as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of a repeat MRI. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of a diagnosis of lumbar strain with disc bulge and stenosis. In addition, there is documentation of a previous lumbar MRI performed on 10/4/12. However, despite documentation of objective findings (tenderness to palpation over the bilateral L5-S1, bilateral sciatic notch, posterior thighs, calves, and feet; and decreased lumbar range of motion), there is no documentation of objective findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination. In addition, there is no documentation of a condition/diagnosis for which a repeat study is indicated (to diagnose a change in the patient's condition marked by new or altered physical findings). Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for MRI lumbar spine/requested TX/SVS is not medically necessary.