

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0026211		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	06/13/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/28/2010
<b>Decision Date:</b>	07/21/2014	<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 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:

The applicant is a represented [REDACTED] employee who has filed a claim for chronic neck pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of April 28, 2010. Thus far, the applicant has been treated with the following: Analgesic medications; attorney representations; earlier cervical fusion surgery; subsequent placement of a spinal cord stimulator; and unspecified amounts of physical therapy over the course of the claim. In a Utilization Review Report dated January 28, 2014, the claims administrator denied a request for preop medical clearance evaluation on the grounds that an associated request for cervical spine surgery had also been denied. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. In a January 27, 2014 progress note, the applicant stated that neither the spinal cord stimulator implant nor the cervical fusion metallic plates were working. The applicant therefore wanted both of these articles removed, it was stated. The applicant was on Neurontin, Norco, MS Contin, and Ambien, it was stated. The applicant was asked to pursue trigger point injection therapy and an occipital nerve block. Home exercises were endorsed. Norco, MS Contin, and Ambien were renewed. In a request for authorization form dated January 21, 2014, the attending provider sought authorization for a cervical spine surgery, associated two-day inpatient stay, and preoperative medical clearance. In an office visit of January 13, 2014, it was again stated that the applicant was in the process of pursuing surgical hardware removal procedure and/or removal of the spinal cord stimulator. The applicant's medical history was not detailed on this occasion. The remainder of the file was surveyed. There was no evidence that the applicant underwent the surgery in dispute.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**PRE-OP MEDICAL CLEARANCE:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Low Back- Lumbar & Thoracic(Acute & Chronic Chapter; Low Back Chapter and ACC/AHA 2007 Guidelines on Perioperative Cardiovascular Evaluation and Care for Noncardiac Surgery.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Medscape Preoperative Evaluation and Management by Robert A Schwartz, MD, MPH; Chief Editor: William D James.

**Decision rationale:** The MTUS does not address the topic of preoperative medical clearances. While the Medscape Preoperative Evaluation and Management article does acknowledge that the added time invested in a preoperative evaluation yields an improved physician-patient relationship and reduces surgical complications, in this case, however, there is no evidence that the applicant has undergone the surgery in question. Rather, the information on file points to the associated request for cervical spine surgery being denied. Since the cervical spine surgery in question was denied, the derivative request for a preoperative clearance is not medically necessary.