

|                       |              |                              |            |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Case Number:</b>   | CM14-0030857 |                              |            |
| <b>Date Assigned:</b> | 06/20/2014   | <b>Date of Injury:</b>       | 11/07/2012 |
| <b>Decision Date:</b> | 07/18/2014   | <b>UR Denial Date:</b>       | 02/13/2014 |
| <b>Priority:</b>      | Standard     | <b>Application Received:</b> | 03/11/2014 |

### 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 Neurological Surgery 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 injured worker is a 56-year-old female injured on November 7, 2012. The mechanism of injury is a slip and fall. The most recent progress note, dated February 3, 2014, indicates that there are ongoing complaints of neck and lower back pain. The physical examination demonstrated cervical spasms and decreased cervical spine range of motion. There was also decreased lumbar spine range of motion and a bilateral positive straight leg raise test. Muscle strength in the lower extremities was rated at 4/5. There was a diagnosis of spinal stenosis of the cervical and lumbar spine, cervical and lumbar degenerative disc disease, and a lumbar sprain/strain. The treatment plan recommended a work conditioning program for the lumbar spine, a urine drug screen, as well as upper and lower extremity nerve conduction studies. A request had been made for work conditioning for the neck and lower back three times a week for six weeks and was not certified in the pre-authorization process on February 13, 2014.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Work Conditioning for the neck and low back; 3 x 6: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Work conditioning, work hardening Page(s): 125-126. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Physical Medicine Guidelines - Work Conditioning.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low Back - Lumbar & Thoracic (Acute & Chronic), Work conditioning/work hardening, updated July 3, 2014.

**Decision rationale:** According to the Official Disability Guidelines, the justification for inclusion in a work conditioning program should include documentation of all musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, vocational, motivational, behavioral, and cognitive status. There should be a diagnostic interview with a mental health provider, and a determination of safety issues and accommodation at the place of the work injury. A functional capacity evaluation should also be performed prior to this program as well as evidence of previous physical therapy and documentation that no future surgery is anticipated. The attached medical record does not indicate that these pre-required assessments have been made. Therefore this request for participation in a work conditioning program for the neck and back is not medically necessary.