

Case Number:	CM14-0031404		
Date Assigned:	04/09/2014	Date of Injury:	06/26/2012
Decision Date:	05/08/2014	UR Denial Date:	01/14/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/03/2014

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 Orthopedic Surgery and is licensed to practice in New York, New Hampshire, and Washington. 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 has a date of injury is 26 June 2012. The patient has chronic neck pain. The patient has been diagnosed with disc herniation in the cervical spine. In this case there is approval for anterior cervical discectomy and fusion at C5-C6 with allograft and cage and plate. At issue is whether hard cervical collar after the surgery is medically necessary.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

POST-OPERATIVE, OFF THE SHELF, CERVICAL HARD COLLAR: 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) Neck & Upper Back Procedure Summary.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Neck Pain Chapter.

Decision rationale: a cervical brace does not improve fusion rate for clinical outcomes of patients undergoing single level anterior fusion with plating. Plates limit the motion between the graft and the vertebrae in the anterior cervical fusion. Therefore, the use of a postoperative collar is not supported by current guidelines. The request for a hard cervical collar is not medically necessary and appropriate.

