

Case Number:	CM14-0036615		
Date Assigned:	06/25/2014	Date of Injury:	08/05/2007
Decision Date:	09/12/2014	UR Denial Date:	03/07/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/26/2014

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 Family 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 35 year old male who reported an industrial injury to the back on 8/5/2007, over 7 years ago, attributed to the performance of his customary job tasks. The patient was assessed as MMI. The patient complained of back pain radiating to the BLEs. The patient was noted to have been treated with medications, PT; acupuncture; and a functional restoration program was completed in 2013. The objective findings on examination included a diminished ROM of the lumbar spine. The patient was diagnosed with lumbar disc herniation at L5-S1; radiculitis; and BLE radiculitis. The patient was ordered 2x4 additional sessions of PT directed to the lower back.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical Therapy 2 times week for 4 weeks for the Lumbar Spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98-99. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), web-based version, Physical Therapy Preamble.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 299-300, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines physical medicine Page(s): 97-98. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation (ODG) neck and upper back chapter-PT; back chapter-PT.

Decision rationale: The request is for authorization of 2x4 weeks additional sessions of PT to the back 7 years after the DOI exceeds the number of sessions of PT recommended by the CA MTUS and the time period recommended for rehabilitation. The evaluation of the patient documented no objective findings on examination to support the medical necessity of physical therapy 7 years after the cited DOI with no documented weakness or muscle atrophy as opposed to a self-directed HEP. There are no objective findings to support the medical necessity of 2x4 sessions of physical therapy for the rehabilitation of the patient over the number recommended by evidence based guidelines. The patient is documented with no signs of weakness, no significant reduction of ROM, or muscle atrophy. There is no demonstrated medical necessity for the prescribed PT to the back 7 years after the DOI and subsequent to the completion of a FRP. The patient is not documented to be in HEP. There is no objective evidence provided by the provider to support the medical necessity of the requested 2x4 sessions of PT over a self-directed home exercise program. The CA MTUS recommends ten (10) sessions of physical therapy over 8 weeks for the lumbar spine rehabilitation subsequent to lumbar strain/sprain and lumbar spine DDD with integration into HEP. The provider did not provide any current objective findings to support the medical necessity of additional PT beyond the number recommended by evidence based guidelines. Given the above the request is not medically necessary.