

Case Number:	CM14-0053489		
Date Assigned:	07/07/2014	Date of Injury:	06/08/1999
Decision Date:	08/15/2014	UR Denial Date:	04/15/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/22/2014

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, has a subspecialty in Interventional Spine 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 patient is a 62-year-old female with a date of injury of 06/08/1999. The listed diagnoses per [REDACTED] are radiculopathy; cervical spine, pain in joint involving shoulder region, neck pain, spinal stenosis in cervical region, migraine, headache, facet arthropathy, and COAT. According to progress report 04/08/2014 by [REDACTED], the patient presents with moderate to severe neck pain. The location of pain is in the upper back, lower back, neck, and left shoulder. The patient describes the pain as deep and stabbing in sensation. The physician recommends the patient go to a 6-hour neck school for her education about postural awareness and body mechanics and re-injury prevention. Utilization review denied the request on 04/15/2014.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Six Hour Therapy Educational Session for Cervical Spine Postural Awareness: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM), 2nd Edition, (2004); Evidence based medicine, page 491.

Decision rationale: This patient presents with chronic moderate to severe neck pain. The physician reports that he would like the patient to learn how to perform her work and not work duties with less pain and more stamina. He argues that this can only happen with the assistance of an outside party who can teach the patient about proper body mechanics. He is requesting a 6-hour neck school for her education about postural awareness and body mechanics and re-injury prevention. ACOEM guidelines state the following regarding evidence based medicine on page 491. Evidence based medicine focuses on the need for health care providers to rely on a critical appraisal of available scientific evidence rather than clinical opinion or anecdotal reports in reaching decisions regarding diagnosis, treatment, causation, and other aspects of health care decision making. This mandates that information regarding health outcomes in study populations or experimental groups be extracted from the medical literature, after which it can be analyzed, synthesized, and applied to individual patients. In this case, there is no evidence provided that a 6-hour educational session for postural awareness would result in significant improvement in this patient's chronic neck pain. Postural awareness and body mechanics are something that is addressed to conventional physical therapy. None of the guidelines discuss postural awareness program or treatments which indicate that this treatment is not main-stream. Therefore, this request is not medically necessary.