

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0054685		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	07/07/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	03/26/1998
<b>Decision Date:</b>	08/29/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	04/18/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	04/23/2014

### 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 and Rehabilitation, has a subspecialty in : Pain Management 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 male patient with the date of injury of March 26, 1998. A Utilization Review was performed on April 17, 2014 and recommended modification of lumbar selective nerve root blocks at right L4, L5, and S1 to lumbar selective nerve root blocks at right L4 and L5 nerve roots due to guidelines only supporting up to 2 levels to be injected in one sitting. A Progress Report dated April 8, 2014 identifies Subjective findings of back pain 7-9, right lower extremity pain 7-9, and left lower extremity pain 4-7 with associated numbness, tingling, and weakness. Objective findings identify decreased sensation right L5/S1. Diagnoses identify low back pain. Treatment Plan identifies selective nerve root blocks right L4, L5, S1. An Electrodiagnostic Report dated March 27, 2014 identifies focal EMG findings in the right lower extremity most consistent with a chronic right L4 radiculopathy. An MRI of the lumbar spine dated November 14, 2013 identifies at L3-4 bilateral foraminal stenosis with impingement upon the exiting nerve roots, slightly increased since the previous examination. At L4-5 bilateral foraminal stenosis, greater on the right, this has increased slightly since the previous examination. At L5-S1 there is bilateral foraminal stenosis with impingement upon the exiting nerve roots, essentially unchanged since the previous examination.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Lumbar Selective Nerve Root Blocks at Right L4-L5 and S1: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural Steroid Injections (ESIS). Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Treatment Guidelines , Criteria for Epidural Steroid Injections.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines 9792.20-9792.26 and 46 of 127 Epidural steroid injections (ESIs) Page(s): 46 OF 127.

**Decision rationale:** Regarding the request for Lumbar Selective Nerve Root Blocks at Right L4, L5 and S1, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that epidural injections are recommended as an option for treatment of radicular pain, defined as pain in dermatomal distribution with corroborative findings of radiculopathy. Guidelines additionally state no more than two nerve root levels should be injected. Within the documentation available for review, the documentation of symptoms and findings are consistent with radiculopathy that is corroborated by electrodiagnostic and imaging studies. However, guidelines do not recommend injecting more than two nerve root levels. As such, the currently requested Lumbar Selective Nerve Root Blocks at Right L4, L5 and S1 is not medically necessary.