

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0055498		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	07/09/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	06/02/2008
<b>Decision Date:</b>	09/19/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	04/15/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	04/24/2014

### 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 patient with a date of injury of 6/2/08. A utilization review determination dated 4/15/14 recommends modification from repeat transforaminal ESI left L4, L5, and S1 nerve roots x 2 to the same procedure x 1. 3/7/14 medical report identifies neck, back, and shoulder complaints. She fell 3 weeks earlier while walking and impacted her left side. She was seen at the ER and was told that she had 3 broken ribs. Neck and low back pain is 5/10 with no numbness, tingling, or burning. On exam, gait is antalgic. There is tenderness and limited ROM with normal sensation. Muscle strength is equal bilaterally, with 5-/5 TA, 4+/5 EHL, 5-/5 INV, 5-/5 plantar flexion, and 4+/5 EV. SLR is positive to the left at 60 degrees causing pain to the knee and slump test is positive bilaterally.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Repeat transforaminal steroid injection to the Lumbar-4, Lumbar-5 and Sacral-1 nerver roots times 2:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines, Epidural Steriod Injections.

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

**Decision rationale:** Regarding the request for repeat transforaminal steroid injection x 2, 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. Regarding repeat epidural injections, guidelines state that repeat blocks should be based on continued objective documented pain and functional improvement, including at least 50% pain relief with associated reduction of medication use for six to eight weeks, with a general recommendation of no more than 4 blocks per region per year. A series of injections is not supported and no more than 2 nerve root levels should be injected with transforaminal blocks. Within the documentation available for review, there is no clear indication of at least 50% pain relief with associated functional improvement and reduction of medication use for six weeks from the prior injection. Furthermore, there are no current radicular symptoms noted, as the patient has no numbness, tingling, or burning. Finally, the current request is for transforaminal injections at 3 nerve root levels x 2, while the CA MTUS does not support injecting more than 2 nerve root levels, and a series of injections is also not supported. In light of the above issues, the currently requested repeat transforaminal steroid injection x 2 is not medically necessary.