

Case Number:	CM14-0076446		
Date Assigned:	07/18/2014	Date of Injury:	03/17/2011
Decision Date:	10/03/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/15/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/27/2014

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 Occupational Medicine 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 applicant is a represented [REDACTED] employee who has filed a claim for chronic low back pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of March 17, 2011. Thus far, the applicant has been treated with the following: Analgesic medications; attorney representation; unspecified amounts of physical therapy; transfer of care to and from various providers in various specialties; topical compounds; adjuvant medications; and earlier knee arthroscopy. In a Utilization Review Report dated May 14, 2014, the claims administrator modified a request for an interferential unit and supplies, 30- to 60-day rental and/or purchase as a one-month trial of a conventional TENS unit. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. The applicant underwent shoulder arthroscopy on June 18, 2013. On July 26, 2013, the applicant was placed off of work, on total temporary disability. In a progress note dated April 30, 2014, the applicant reported persistent complaints of shoulder and neck pain, 7/10. Authorization was sought for an interferential unit 30- to 60-day rental. A neurology consultation was sought. It was suggested that the applicant might have a superimposed polyneuropathy issue. A rather proscriptive 5-pound lifting limitation was endorsed. It did not appear that the applicant was working with said limitation in place.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulator (TENS) and supplies, thirty to sixty day rental and/or purchase: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines 2009, Interferential Current Stimulation (ICS) Page(s): 120.

Decision rationale: On page 120 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines does support a 30-day trial of an interferential stimulator in applicants in whom pain is ineffectively controlled due to diminished medication efficacy, pain is ineffectively controlled with medications due to medication side effects, a history of substance abuse which should prevent provision of analgesic medications, and/or significant pain from postoperative conditions which limits the ability to perform home exercises and/or attend physical therapy, in this case, however, there was no mention of any of the aforementioned issues being present here. There was no mention of intolerance to and/or failure of multiple classes of first-line oral pharmaceuticals. There was no mention of any issues with analgesic medication side effects and no clearly stated history of substance abuse which would prevent provision of analgesic medications. Therefore, the 30- to 60-day rental and/or purchase of an Interferential Unit and associated supplies is not medically necessary.