

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0080066		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	07/18/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	02/06/2005
<b>Decision Date:</b>	09/12/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	05/21/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	05/30/2014

### 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 Emergency Medicine and is licensed to practice in New York. 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 41-year-old female who was injured on February 6, 2005. The patient continued to experience pain in the low back. Physical examination was notable for normal motor strength in lower extremities, intact sensation in lower extremities, and positive straight leg raise. Diagnoses included lumbar pain, bilateral hip pain, and sciatica. Treatment included physical therapy, aqua therapy, chiropractic therapy, medications and a back brace. Requests for authorization for physical therapy and lumbar corset were submitted for consideration.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

#### **Physical Therapy times twelve (12):**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation California Labor Code 4604.5.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines.

**Decision rationale:** Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that there is no high-grade scientific evidence to support the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of passive physical modalities such as traction, heat/cold applications, massage, diathermy, TENS units, ultrasound, laser treatment, or biofeedback. They can provide short-term relief during the early phases of

treatment. Active treatment is associated with better outcomes and can be managed as a home exercise program with supervision. ODG states that physical therapy is more effective in short-term follow up. Patients should be formally assessed after a "six-visit clinical trial" to see if the patient is moving in a positive direction, no direction, or a negative direction (prior to continuing with the physical therapy). When treatment duration and/or number of visits exceed the guideline, exceptional factors should be noted. Recommended number of visits for myalgia and myositis is 9-10 visits over 8 weeks; and for neuralgia, neuritis, and radiculitis is 8-10 visits over 4 weeks. In this case the number of visits requested surpasses the recommended number of six for the clinical trial. In addition the patient has undergone prior physical therapy. There is no documentation of objective evidence of functional improvement. The request should not be authorized.

**Lumbar corset:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 16 Eye Chapter Page(s): 301. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ACOEM Guideline (revised November 2007), Recommendation: Lumbar Supports for Prevention of Low Back Pain.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 298.

**Decision rationale:** Lumbar corset is a type of lumbar support. There is no evidence for the effectiveness of lumbar supports in preventing back pain in industry. Proper lifting techniques and discussion of general conditioning should be emphasized, although teaching proper lifting mechanics and even eliminating strenuous lifting fails to prevent back injury claims and back discomfort, according to some high-quality studies. The request should not be authorized.