

Case Number:	CM14-0084022		
Date Assigned:	07/21/2014	Date of Injury:	10/02/2012
Decision Date:	10/28/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/08/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/05/2014

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 Family Practice 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 52 year old male claimant sustained a work injury involving the low back. He was diagnosed with lumbar pain with radiculopathy. He had undergone spinal fusion in February 2012. A progress note on 3/4/14 indicated the claimant had continued 3-6/10 pain in the involved areas. He had been taking Vicodin and Soma for pain. Exam findings were notable for paraspinal tenderness of the lumbar spine and slight reduction in range of motion. A subsequent request was made the following month for a lumbar epidural steroid injection.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Lumbar epidural steroid injection at L4-5.: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural Steroid Injections Page(s): 46. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines-Low Back-Epidural steroid Injections.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300.

Decision rationale: According to the ACOEM guidelines, epidural steroid injections are not recommended. Invasive techniques are of questionable merit. Epidural Steroid Injections (LESI)

may provide short-term improvement for nerve root compression due to a herniated nucleus pulposus. The treatments do not provide any long-term functional benefit or reduce the need for surgery. The claimant did not have the above diagnoses that would derive some benefit from LESI. The request, therefore, for a lumbar epidural steroid injections is not medically necessary.