

Case Number:	CM14-0087915		
Date Assigned:	07/23/2014	Date of Injury:	10/14/2005
Decision Date:	09/19/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/16/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/11/2014

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 47-year-old male who was injured on October 14, 2005. The patient continued to experience pain in his lower back. Physical examination was notable for lumbar paraspinal tenderness and spasms, negative straight leg raise, and post-operative motor changes L5-S1. Diagnoses included post-surgical changes L5-S1 and status post micro discectomy L5-S1. Treatment included surgery, aquatic therapy, physical therapy, and medications. Request for authorization for aquatic therapy for lumbar spine was submitted for consideration.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Aquatic Therapy 12 treatments lumbar: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aquatic Therapy, Physical Medicine Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 56.

Decision rationale: Aqua therapy is recommended as an optional form of exercise therapy, where available, as an alternative to land-based physical therapy. Aquatic therapy (including swimming) can minimize the effects of gravity, so it is specifically recommended where reduced weight bearing is desirable, for example extreme obesity. Water exercise improved some

components of health-related quality of life, balance, and stair climbing in females with fibromyalgia, but regular exercise and higher intensities may be required to preserve most of these gains. The recommended number of visits follows those recommended for land-based physical therapy. 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 therapy). In this case the patient had received 5 aquatic therapy sessions. There is no documentation of objective evidence of functional improvement with physical therapy and aquatic therapy already received. In addition there is no documentation that the patient requires therapy that minimizes the effects of gravity. The request is not medically necessary.