

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0127136		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	08/13/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	06/25/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	07/08/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	08/04/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	08/11/2014

### 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. 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/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:

State(s) of Licensure: Iowa, Illinois, Hawaii

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine, Public Health & General Preventive Medicine

### 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 59-year-old male with a June 25, 2012 date of injury. A progress note dated July 9, 2014 documents subjective findings (increased neck and low back pain rated at a level of 7/10; numbness and tingling in the left arm has returned; pain in the thoracic region radiating to the right side of the chest; cramping of the right calf; burning sensation from the left buttock down to the bilateral feet; trouble sleeping), objective findings (limited range of motion of the cervical, thoracic, and lumbar spine; diffuse tenderness of the spine with spasms appreciated into the right greater than left side; diminished sensation of the left C6, C7, and C8 dermatomes; diminished sensation of the left L4, L5, and S1 dermatomes; decreased strength of the left upper extremity and right lower extremity), and current diagnoses (multilevel disc herniations of cervical spine with moderate to severe neural foraminal narrowing; facet arthropathy of cervical spine; severe facet arthropathy at L3-L4). Treatments to date have included lumbar rhizotomy bilaterally (50% improvement), lumbar spine fusion, medial branch block, lumbar epidural steroid injection, chiropractic treatment, medications, and imaging studies. The treating physician documented a plan of care that included a magnetic resonance imaging of the cervical spine.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Cervical spine MRI:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 165.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 177,182. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Neck and Upper Back, Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

**Decision rationale:** ACOEM states "Criteria for ordering imaging studies are: Emergence of a red flag, Physiologic evidence of tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction, Failure to progress in a strengthening program intended to avoid surgery and Clarification of the anatomy prior to an invasive procedure". ODG states, "Not recommended except for indications list below. Patients who are alert, have never lost consciousness, are not under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, have no distracting injuries, have no cervical tenderness, and have no neurologic findings, do not need imaging". Indications for imaging -- MRI (magnetic resonance imaging): Chronic neck pain (= after 3 months conservative treatment), radiographs normal, neurologic signs or symptoms present. Neck pain with radiculopathy if severe or progressive neurologic deficit. Chronic neck pain, radiographs show spondylosis, neurologic signs or symptoms present. Chronic neck pain, radiographs show old trauma, neurologic signs or symptoms present. Chronic neck pain, radiographs show bone or disc margin destruction. Suspected cervical spine trauma, neck pain, clinical findings suggest ligamentous injury (sprain), radiographs and/or CT "normal". Known cervical spine trauma: equivocal or positive plain films with neurological deficit. Upper back/thoracic spine trauma with neurological deficit". The treating physician has not provided evidence of red flags to meet the criteria above. The treating physician has not provided previous MRI's to review. It is unclear when this patient last had an MRI, which is necessary in establishing the need for additional imaging. As, such the request for cervical spine MRI is not medically necessary.