

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0187642		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	11/17/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	03/21/2006
<b>Decision Date:</b>	01/06/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	10/20/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	11/10/2014

### 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 53-year-old male who was injured on March 21, 2006. The patient continued to experience pain in back and neck. Physical examination was notable for normal motor strength of the bilateral lower extremities and decreased sensation in the left L5 dermatomal distribution. Diagnoses included cervical musculoligamentous injury, low back pain, and postlaminectomy syndrome. Treatment included medications, physical therapy, surgery and acupuncture. Request for authorization for electrodes for 5 months was submitted for consideration.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**DME Purchase for Electrodes X5 Months:** 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 Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 114-115, 118-119, 121.

**Decision rationale:** The request is for electrodes for 5 months for a multi-stim unit. Multi-stim unit is a device that provides TENS, interferential, and neuromuscular stimulation. TENS units are not recommended as a primary treatment modality, but a one-month home-based TENS trial may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option, if used as an adjunct to a program of

evidence-based functional restoration, including reductions in medication use, for neuropathic pain, phantom limb pain, spasticity, and multiple sclerosis. Several published evidence-based assessments of transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) have found that evidence is lacking concerning effectiveness. Functional restoration programs (FRPs) are designed to use a medically directed, interdisciplinary pain management approach geared specifically to patients with chronic disabling occupational musculoskeletal disorders. These programs emphasize the importance of function over the elimination of pain. FRPs incorporate components of exercise progression with disability management and psychosocial intervention. The patient was not participating in a functional restoration program. In addition there is no documentation that the patient had used the TENS unit for one month successfully. TENS therapy is not recommended. Interferential current stimulation (ICS) is not recommended as an isolated intervention. There is no quality evidence of effectiveness except in conjunction with recommended treatments, including return to work, exercise and medications, and limited evidence of improvement on those recommended treatments alone. ICS is indicated when pain is ineffectively controlled due to diminished effectiveness of medications, pain is ineffectively controlled with medications due to side effects, there is a history of substance abuse, significant pain from postoperative conditions limits the ability to perform exercise programs/physical therapy treatment, or the pain is unresponsive to conservative measures. In this case the requests are being made for physical therapy. ICS is not indicated. Neuromuscular electrical stimulation (NMES) is not recommended. NMES is used primarily as part of a rehabilitation program following stroke and there is no evidence to support its use in chronic pain. There is no indication for use of the multi-stim unit. The electrodes are not necessary.