

Case Number:	CM14-0188115		
Date Assigned:	11/18/2014	Date of Injury:	09/28/2012
Decision Date:	01/07/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/27/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/12/2014

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 Medicine 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 female patient who sustained a work related injury on 9/28/12. The exact mechanism of injury was not specified in the records provided. The current diagnoses include chronic pain syndrome, Lumbar canal stenosis and status-post a posterior lumbar inter body fusion at L5-S1. Per the doctor's note dated 10/17/14, the patient has complaints of low back pain with radiation to the legs and chronic neck pain with radiation to the arms at 8/10. She has had left shoulder pain that was radiating to arm and elbow with tingling in arm to fingers with weakness. A physical examination revealed tenderness over L3-S1 paraspinals bilaterally, range of motion of the lumbar spine was restricted and painful in all directions, normal motor and sensory examination in the lower extremities and positive straight leg test is on the left side. A physical examination of the left shoulder revealed tenderness on palpation limited range of motion, with positive impingement sign normal reflexes and sensation. The current medication lists include Atenolol, Gabapentin, Norco, Flexeril and Simvastatin. The patient has had MRI of the left shoulder that revealed partial tear of rotator cuff, CT myelogram of lumbar spine dated June 12, 2014 showed that fusion at L5-S1, a mild posterior bulging disc at L4-5 and L5-S1 with mild bilateral foraminal stenosis, an MRI of lumbar spine dated January 15, 2014 that showed that has mild degenerative disc disease at L4-5, without any high grade stenosis; an MRI of her left shoulder, dated August 5, 2014 that showed a complex partial tear of the supraspinatus and AC joint degeneration, synovitis and capsulitis; EMG/NCV of lower extremity on 6/17/14 that was normal. She underwent a lumbar inter body fusion at L5-S1. She also has received an unspecified number of PT visits for this injury. She was in physical therapy and it made it worse. The patient has tried physical therapy in the past without any significant benefits.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical therapy three times a week for four weeks for the left shoulder: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Therapy Page(s): 98.

Decision rationale: Per the guidelines cited, "Patients are instructed and expected to continue active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement levels." A valid rationale as to why remaining rehabilitation cannot be accomplished in the context of an independent exercise program is not specified in the records provided. The request for Physical therapy three times a week for four weeks for the left shoulder is not fully established for this patient.