

Case Number:	CM14-0193444		
Date Assigned:	12/01/2014	Date of Injury:	08/31/2013
Decision Date:	01/14/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/23/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/18/2014

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 North Carolina. 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 claimant had a date of injury of 8/31/2013. Back pain began after lifting a couch while at work. Diagnoses include lumbar spinal stenosis, disc herniation with resultant radiculopathy. Treatment has included chiropractic therapy, acupuncture, oral and topical medication and epidural steroid injection. There has been consideration of lumbar surgery but the treating physician feels that the anticipated lumbar fusion would be a poor choice because of the claimant relatively young age. Functional limitations include inability to sit for more than 2 hours and inability to lift more than 25 pounds. The claimant is working modified duty. The request is for a Functional Restoration Program.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

1 Initial evaluation at [REDACTED] Functional Restoration Program: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 30-32.

Decision rationale: CA MTUS considers functional restoration programs recommended where there is access to programs with proven successful outcomes, for patients with conditions that

put them at risk of delayed recovery when the patient is motivated to improve and return to work, and meets the patient selection criteria outlined next. These criteria include ALL of the following: (1) An adequate and thorough evaluation has been made, including baseline functional testing so follow-up with the same test can note functional improvement; (2) Previous methods of treating chronic pain have been unsuccessful and there is an absence of other options likely to result in significant clinical improvement; (3) The patient has a significant loss of ability to function independently resulting from the chronic pain; (4) The patient is not a candidate where surgery or other treatments would clearly be warranted (if a goal of treatment is to prevent or avoid controversial or optional surgery, a trial of 10 visits may be implemented to assess whether surgery may be avoided); (5) The patient exhibits motivation to change, and is willing to forgo secondary gains, including disability payments to effect this change; & (6) Negative predictors of success above have been addressed. Negative predictors of success include (1) a negative relationship with the employer/supervisor; (2) poor work adjustment and satisfaction; (3) a negative outlook about future employment; (4) high levels of psychosocial distress (higher pretreatment levels of depression, pain and disability); (5) involvement in financial disability disputes; (6) greater rates of smoking; (7) duration of pre-referral disability time; (8) prevalence of opioid use; and (9) pretreatment levels of pain. Integrative summary reports that include treatment goals, progress assessment and stage of treatment, must be made available upon request and at least on a bi-weekly basis during the course of the treatment program. Treatment is not suggested for longer than 2 weeks without evidence of demonstrated efficacy as documented by subjective and objective gains. Although the claimant in this case does have functional limitations, he has not had a significant loss of function related to chronic pain and is working a modified duty schedule. A Functional Restoration Program is not medically necessary.