

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0207713		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	12/19/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	07/21/2008
<b>Decision Date:</b>	02/13/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	12/08/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	12/11/2014

### 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 Physical Medicine Rehab, 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:

The patient is a 55 year old male with date of injury 7/21/08, sustained while lifting and clearing heavy debris such as AC unit/compressor etc. The treating physician report dated 10/22/14 (117) indicates that the patient presents with pain affecting the low back and bilateral knee. The patient notes mild radiation of pain to the lower extremities and has generalized weakness without localization. The patient also continues to have pain and swelling of his right knee with only mild discomfort of the left knee primarily medially. The physical examination findings reveal a limited range of motion of the lumbar spine and spinous process tenderness from L4 to the sacrum. There is moderately severe paraspinal muscle guarding with tenderness and there is marked guarding of movement. Mild swelling of the right knee with slight effusion is present as well as tenderness along the medial joint line. Prior treatment history includes aquatic therapy (5 sessions 2013), cortisone injection of the right knee, microdiscectomy, arthroscopic surgery of the left knee, and prescribed medications. The current diagnoses are: 1. Chronic low back pain post microdiscectomy 2. Torn medial meniscus right knee 3. Status post arthroscopic surgery left knee. The utilization review report dated 12/8/14 modified the request for Ten aquatic therapy sessions for the lumbar spine based on a lack of medical necessity.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Ten aquatic therapy sessions for the lumbar spine: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 98,Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aquatic Therapy.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical medicine Page(s): 98-99.

**Decision rationale:** The patient presents with pain affecting the low back and bilateral knee. The current request is for Ten aquatic therapy sessions for the lumbar spine. The UR report dated 12/8/14 notes that a total of 5 sessions of physical therapy were authorized in 2013. The treating physician report dated 11/14/14 states that the patient remains symptomatic and feels that aqua therapy helps him to stay active. MTUS supports physical medicine (physical therapy and occupational therapy) 8-10 sessions for myalgia and neuritis type conditions. The MTUS guidelines only provide a total of 8-10 sessions over 4 weeks and the patient is expected to then continue on with a home exercise program. In this case, the patient has received 5 visits of aquatic therapy to date and the current request of 10 visits exceeds the recommendation of 8-10 visits as outlined by the MTUS guidelines on page 99. Therefore the request is not medically necessary.