

Case Number:	CM15-0001023		
Date Assigned:	01/12/2015	Date of Injury:	09/02/1991
Decision Date:	04/02/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/18/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/05/2015

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: New Jersey, Michigan, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Neuromuscular 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 50 year old male sustained a work related injury on 09/02/1991. According to a progress report dated 11/13/2014, the injured worker had recently had significant pulmonary issues resulting in surgery, hospitalization and treatment for MRSA. He developed significant right leg pain that radiated from his back into the right thigh down to the calf. He has been walking with a limp. Medications included Neurontin, Robaxin and Celebrex. Diagnoses included spinal stenosis lumbar and sciatica due to displacement of lumbar disc. Recommendations included a MRI. According to a provider note dated 12/08/2014, the injured worker had undergone several different treatments over the years for his lumbar spine, including surgery which was performed on 09/26/2011. Despite the surgery as well as various other conservative treatment, his still has, at least on some level, constant/chronic low back pain. After his surgery in 2011, the injured worker went to physical therapy where he was able to use a TENS unit. He continued to go to physical therapy off and on over the years and finds that the TENS unit does help some of his pain. The provider recommended that the injured worker receive his own TENS unit for home use since it did seem to be therapeutic for him. On 12/18/2014, Utilization Review non-certified TENS Unit (99 months/Lifetime). According to the Utilization Review physician, the provider indicated that the injured worker used a TENS unit during physical therapy and that it provided some relief. The effect of the use of a TENS unit independently has not been evaluated. It did not appear the use of the TENS unit was going to be used in conjunction with a program of evidence based functional restoration. Guidelines cited for this review included CA MTUS

Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines TENS, Chronic Pain (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation). The decision was appealed for an Independent Medical Review.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TENS Unit (99 month/ lifetime): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines TENS, chronic pain(transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Transcutaneous electrotherapy Page(s): 114.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, TENS is not recommended as primary treatment modality, but a one month based trial may be considered, if used as an adjunct to a functional restoration program. There is no evidence that a functional restoration program is planned for this patient. There is no recent documentation of recent flare of neuropathic pain. There is no strong evidence supporting the benefit of TENS for back pain disorders.