

Case Number:	CM15-0002838		
Date Assigned:	01/13/2015	Date of Injury:	04/11/2006
Decision Date:	03/10/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/30/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/06/2015

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: Georgia

Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, Pain Management

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 injured worker is a 44 year old female who suffered a work related injury on 04/11/06. Per the physician notes from 12/11/14 she continues to complain of pain about the low back as well as radicular symptoms in her legs. She had relief from an ESI, which wore off after several months. The treatment plan included another L4-5 ESI, as well as her continued pain regimen. On 12/30/14, the Claims Administrator non certified the ESI citing MTUS guidelines. The non-certified treatment was subsequently appealed for Independent Medical Review.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Epidural steroid injection under fluoroscopy at L4-L5: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural steroid injections (ESIs).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural Steroid Injections Page(s): 47.

Decision rationale: Lumbar Epidural Steroid Injection under fluoroscopy at L4-5 is not medically necessary. The California MTUS page 47 states the purpose of epidural steroid

injections is to reduce pain and inflammation, restoring range of motion and thereby facilitating progress in more active treatment programs, and avoiding surgery, but this treatment alone is no significant long-term functional benefit. Radiculopathy must be documented by physical examination and corroborated by imaging studies and/or electrodiagnostic testing. Initially unresponsive to conservative treatment, injections should be performed using fluoroscopy, if the ESI is for diagnostic purposes a maximum of 2 injections should be performed. No more than 2 nerve root levels should be injected using transforaminal blocks. No more than 1 interlaminar level should be injected at one session. In the therapeutic phase repeat blocks should be based on continued objective documented pain and functional improvement, including at least 50% pain relief with associated reduction of medication use for 6-8 weeks, with the general recommendation of no more than 4 blocks per region per year. Current research does not support a series of 3 injections in either the diagnostic or therapeutic phase. We recommend no more than 2 epidural steroid injections. The physical exam is not consistent with radicular pain including a straight leg raise; therefore, the requested service is not medically necessary.