

Case Number:	CM15-0107859		
Date Assigned:	06/12/2015	Date of Injury:	10/08/2007
Decision Date:	07/13/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/18/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/03/2015

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: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 52 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 10/8/07. She reported initial complaints of back pain. The injured worker was diagnosed as having lumbar degenerative disc disease with radiculopathy; peroneal nerve palsy. Treatment to date has included lumbar epidural steroid injection (2011); physical therapy; chiropractic therapy; medications. Diagnostics included MRI lumbar spine 12/28/07); EMG/NCV bilateral lower extremities (3/1/10). Currently, the PR-2 notes dated 5/4/15 indicated the injured worker is at this office as a follow-up of her lumbar degenerative disc disease with radiculopathy and left peroneal nerve palsy. She was referred by her neurosurgeon and has been treated conservatively. The notes document she has had epidural steroid injection at left L5-S1 in 2011, physical therapy and chiropractic therapy. She has completed 11 of 12 chiropractic sessions and finds this treatment helpful and now requesting additional sessions and a TENS unit. Her physical examination was relatively normal noting no tenderness, spasms, negative straight leg raise. The provider's treatment plan includes a request for authorization of a TENS unit for the lower back.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TENS unit, lower back: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Transcutaneous Electrotherapy, TENS for chronic pain, pages 114-117.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines, ongoing treatment is not advisable if there are no signs of objective progress and functional restoration has not been demonstrated. Specified criteria for the use of TENS Unit include trial in adjunct to ongoing treatment modalities within the functional restoration approach as appropriate for documented chronic intractable pain of at least three months duration with failed evidence of other appropriate pain modalities tried such as medication. From the submitted reports, the patient has received extensive conservative medical treatment to include chronic analgesics and other medication, extensive physical therapy, activity modifications, yet the patient has remained symptomatic and functionally impaired. There is no documentation on how or what TENS unit is requested, whether this is for rental or purchase, nor is there any documented short-term or long-term goals of treatment with the TENS unit. There is no evidence for change in functional status, increased in ADLs, decreased VAS score, medication usage, or treatment utilization from the treatment already rendered. The TENS unit, lower back is not medically necessary or appropriate.