

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0109042		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	06/15/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/24/2013
<b>Decision Date:</b>	07/14/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	05/28/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	06/05/2015

### 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: California, Indiana, New York  
Certification(s)/Specialty: Internal 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:

The injured worker is a 53 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 4/24/2013. The mechanism of injury is unknown. The injured worker was diagnosed as having lumbar strain and lumbar disc degeneration. Lumbar magnetic resonance imaging showed herniated nucleus pulposus and diffuse disc bulging. Treatment to date has included lumbar epidural steroid injection, lumbar medial branch blocks, massage therapy, lumbar radiofrequency ablation, therapy and medication management. In a progress note dated 5/6/2015, the injured worker complains of right sided low back pain with improvement in the right foot. Physical examination showed pain with lumbar flexion and extension. The treating physician is requesting 8 sessions of massage therapy for the lumbar spine.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Massage Therapy, 8 sessions for the Lumbar Spine:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines  
Massage Therapy Page(s): 60.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Massage therapy Page(s): 60. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain section, Massage therapy.

**Decision rationale:** Pursuant to the Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines and the Official Disability Guidelines, 8 massage therapy sessions to the lumbar spine are not medically necessary. Massage is a passive intervention and considered an adjunct to other recommended treatment, especially active interventions (e.g. exercise). In the massage therapy should be limited to 4-6 visits in most cases. See the guidelines for details. Massage therapy is beneficial in attenuating diffuse musculoskeletal symptoms, but beneficial effects were registered only during treatment. Massage is a passive intervention and treatment dependence should be avoided. In this case, the injured worker's working diagnoses are strained lumbar region; and strain or sprain of hip/osteoarthritis of hip. The injured worker received seven [REDACTED] therapy visits. The worker received physical therapy and ice that was very helpful. Radicular symptoms resolved. The guidelines allow 4 to 6 visits in most cases. Massage is a passive intervention and considered as an adjunct to other recommended treatment. There are no compelling clinical facts indicating additional massage therapy is recommended. Consequently, absent compelling clinical documentation indicating additional massage therapy is indicated (over and above the recommended four to six visits) after having received 7 massage therapy visits to date, 8 massage therapy sessions to the lumbar spine are not medically necessary.