

Case Number:	CM15-0133416		
Date Assigned:	07/21/2015	Date of Injury:	12/05/2007
Decision Date:	08/17/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/08/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/10/2015

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, Oregon
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Orthopedic Surgery

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 36 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on December 5, 2007. He reported multiple injuries after a motor vehicle accident. The injured worker was diagnosed as having lumbago, disorders of sacrum and acquired spondylolisthesis. Treatment to date has included diagnostic studies, medications, surgery, occupational therapy and physical therapy. On July 13, 2015, the injured worker complained of low back pain with occasional radicular pain, right foot pain and abdominal pain. Prolonged activities increase his back pain. His medications were noted to be working well. The treatment plan included medications and a follow-up visit. On July 8, 2015, Utilization Review non-certified the request for laminectomy interbody fusion, pedicle screw fixation L5-S1 with posterior fusion, LOS, pre-op labs, pre-op chest x-ray and pre-op EKG citing California MTUS Guidelines and Official Disability Guidelines.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Laminectomy Interbody Fusion, Pedicle Screw Fixation L5-S1 with Posterior Fusion:
 Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 307. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Treatment Index, 13th Edition (web), 2015, Low Back, Fusion (spinal).

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) low back.

Decision rationale: The ACOEM Guidelines Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints page 307 states that lumbar fusion, Except for cases of trauma-related spinal fracture or dislocation, fusion of the spine is not usually considered during the first three months of symptoms. Patients with increased spinal instability (not work-related) after surgical decompression at the level of degenerative spondylolisthesis may be candidates for fusion. According to the ODG, Low back, Fusion (spinal) should be considered for 6 months of symptoms. Indications for fusion include neural arch defect, segmental instability with movement of more than 4.5 mm, revision surgery where functional gains are anticipated, infection, tumor, deformity and after a third disc herniation. In addition, ODG states, there is a lack of support for fusion for mechanical low back pain for subjects with failure to participate effectively in active rehab pre-op, total disability over 6 months, active psych diagnosis, and narcotic dependence. In this particular patient there is lack of medical necessity for lumbar fusion as there is no evidence of segmental instability greater than 4.5 mm on flexion/extension views, severe stenosis or psychiatric clearance from the exam note of 7/13/15 to warrant fusion. Therefore the request is not medically necessary.

LOS: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) low back.

Decision rationale: Since the primary procedure is not medically necessary, none of the associated services are medically necessary.

Pre-Operative Labs: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) low back.

Decision rationale: Since the primary procedure is not medically necessary, none of the associated services are medically necessary.

Pre-operative Chest X-ray: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) low back.

Decision rationale: Since the primary procedure is not medically necessary, none of the associated services are medically necessary.

Pre-Operative EKG: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) low back.

Decision rationale: Since the primary procedure is not medically necessary, none of the associated services are medically necessary.