

Case Number:	CM15-0136700		
Date Assigned:	07/24/2015	Date of Injury:	05/24/2010
Decision Date:	08/24/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/10/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/15/2015

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, 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 50-year-old male who sustained an industrial injury on 5/24/10 when he twisted his lower back to avoid being struck by a falling object from a shelf. He currently complains of shooting pain in the low back radiating to both legs left greater than right with numbness and burning. On physical exam of the lumbosacral spine, there was tenderness and spasm in the paravertebral area, tenderness over the bilateral sacroiliac joints with decreased range of motion, positive straight leg raise right and left. He ambulates with a cane. Medications were Norco, Lyrica, temazepam. Diagnoses include lumbar fusion at L5-S1 (2012); lumbar degenerative disc disease; lumbar radiculopathy; post laminectomy syndrome of the lumbar spine; sleep disturbance. Treatments to date include medications. Diagnostics include computed tomography of the lumbar spine (8/27/12) showing evidence of fusion surgery; MRI of the lumbar spine (6/9/10) revealing disc bulge, tear, foraminal stenosis; x-ray of the lumbar spine (5/28/10) unremarkable; MRI of the lumbar spine (9/14/12) showing post-surgical changes, mild central canal narrowing. In the progress note, dated 5/26/15 the treating provider's plan of care included a request for physical therapy twice per week for four weeks for the lumbar spine. On 6/10/15 Utilization, review evaluated a request for physical therapy three times per week for two weeks (lumbar/ sacroiliac).

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical therapy 3 times a week for 2 weeks (lumbar/sacroiliac): Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low Back Chapter, and Physical Therapy.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for additional physical therapy, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines recommend a short course of active therapy with continuation of active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement levels. ODG has more specific criteria for the ongoing use of physical therapy. ODG recommends a trial of physical therapy. If the trial of physical therapy results in objective functional improvement, as well as ongoing objective treatment goals, then additional therapy may be considered. Within the documentation available for review, there is documentation of completion of prior PT sessions of unknown number of sessions, but there is no documentation of specific objective functional improvement with the previous sessions and remaining deficits that cannot be addressed within the context of an independent home exercise program, yet are expected to improve with formal supervised therapy. In light of the above issues, the currently requested additional physical therapy is not medically necessary.