

|                       |              |                              |            |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Case Number:</b>   | CM15-0142600 |                              |            |
| <b>Date Assigned:</b> | 08/03/2015   | <b>Date of Injury:</b>       | 02/19/2013 |
| <b>Decision Date:</b> | 09/03/2015   | <b>UR Denial Date:</b>       | 06/25/2015 |
| <b>Priority:</b>      | Standard     | <b>Application Received:</b> | 07/22/2015 |

### 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: Texas, New York, California  
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational 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 applicant is a represented 32-year-old who has filed a claim for chronic low back and elbow pain with derivative complaints of sleep disturbance and depression reportedly associated with an industrial injury of February 19, 2013. In a Utilization Review report dated June 24, 2015, the claims administrator failed to approve a request for a home TENS unit. The claims administrator referenced progress notes of June 10, 2015, May 27, 2015, and May 6, 2015 in its determination. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On July 8, 2015, the applicant reported multifocal complaints of low back and elbow pain. The applicant was given rather proscriptive 5- to 10-pound lifting limitation. It was suggested that the applicant was not working and had been off of work for some time. The applicant was receiving unemployment compensation benefits, it was reported. The applicant was using Tylenol No. 3 for pain relief, it was acknowledged. In a June 19, 2015 RFA form, a pain management consultation, hand therapy, and a TENS unit were endorsed. In an associated progress note of June 10, 2015, the applicant was placed off of work, on total temporary disability. Burning pain and paresthesias about the left hand were noted. Topical LidoPro gel was endorsed. Twelve sessions of hand therapy were endorsed. The applicant was given a presumptive diagnosis of complex regional pain syndrome. A TENS unit was apparently prescribed and/or dispensed.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Home TENS unit:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation), Criteria for use of TENS.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Criteria for the use of TENS Page(s): 116.

**Decision rationale:** No, the home TENS unit was not medically necessary, medically appropriate, or indicated here. As noted on page 116 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, provision of the TENS unit on a purchase basis should be predicated on evidence of a favorable outcome during an earlier one-month trial of the same, with beneficial outcomes present in terms of both pain relief and function during said one-month trial. Here, however, the attending provider apparently prescribed and/or dispensed the TENS device in question on June 10, 2015, without having the applicant first undergo a one-month trial of the same. Therefore, the request was not medically necessary.