

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0143088		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	08/04/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	08/14/2013
<b>Decision Date:</b>	09/01/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	06/29/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	07/23/2015

### 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: North Carolina  
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

### 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 40 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 8-14-13. Initial complaints were not reviewed. The injured worker was diagnosed as having knee pain-joint pain; lumbago, low back pain; lumbar-thoracic radiculitis; facet arthropathy - cervical, thoracic, and lumbar. Treatment to date has included physical therapy; urine drug screening; medications. Diagnostics studies included MRI right knee (9-23-13); MRI lumbar spine (5-14-14); EMG/NCV study (6-30-14). Currently, the PR-2 notes dated 6-15-15 indicated the injured worker complains of continued headache and back pain and right knee pain. He has numbness with arising in the morning and issue with moving at times and waxes and wanes in intensity. He reports the medications does help and he is able to do light housework, interact with family and friends and walk around stores. He is unable to do anything without medications. He is not having his medications authorized. He has not been authorized for neurosurgery or orthopedic surgery consultations. He presents with back pain and leg pain/sciatica bilaterally. His pain scale is 8 over 10 with medications but 10 over 10 without medications. The provider's treatment plan is to continue with medications and he recommended the injured worker be seen in consultation by a provider for his back pain and then for his knee pain. The provider is requesting authorization of Electrodiagnostic studies for the back and lower extremities.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

## **Electrodiagnostic studies for the back and lower extremities: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints, Chapter 13 Knee Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), low back chapter-lumbar and thoracic (acute and chronic), EMGs.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 301.

**Decision rationale:** The ACOEM chapters on low back complaints and the need for lower extremity EMG/NCV states: Unequivocal objective findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination are sufficient evidence to warrant imaging in patients who do not respond to treatment and who would consider surgery an option. When the neurologic examination is less clear, however, further physiologic evidence of nerve dysfunction should be obtained before ordering an imaging study. Indiscriminant imaging will result in false-positive findings, such as disk bulges, that are not the source of painful symptoms and do not warrant surgery. If physiologic evidence indicates tissue insult or nerve impairment, the practitioner can discuss with a consultant the selection of an imaging test to define a potential cause (magnetic resonance imaging [MRI] for neural or other soft tissue, computer tomography [CT] for bony structures). Electromyography (EMG), including H-reflex tests, may be useful to identify subtle, focal neurologic dysfunction in patients with low back symptoms lasting more than three or four weeks. There are unequivocal objective findings of nerve compromise on the neurologic exam provided for review. However, there is not mention of surgical consideration. There are no unclear neurologic findings on exam. For these reasons, criteria for lower extremity EMG/NCV have not been met as set forth in the ACOEM. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.