

Case Number:	CM15-0148011		
Date Assigned:	08/11/2015	Date of Injury:	12/06/2014
Decision Date:	09/08/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/22/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/30/2015

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 48 year old female who sustained a work related injury December 6, 2014. She tripped and on the edge of a mat, her foot became entangled in electrical cord, and she fell on her left hip twisting her back. She underwent x-rays, chiropractic therapy, medication, and physical therapy. An MRI of the lumbar spine performed March 24, 2015, revealed lumbar spondylosis, moderate disc bulge L2-3, mild disc bulge L5-S1 without any significant stenosis. According to a primary treating physician's progress report, dated June 9, 2015, the injured worker presented with back pain, rated 5 out of 10, the lower back pain is greater. Current medication included Norco, Advil, and Prozac. Physical examination revealed; a normal gait on toes and heels; cervical, thoracic, and lumbosacral paraspinal muscle spasms with tender areas over the lower lumbosacral facet joints as well as the S1 joint; range of motion-back flexion and extension 20-30%, neck flexion and extension 50-60%; gross sensation intact; straight leg raise in the seated position with complaints of tightness in the back. Impressions are low back pain; mid back pain; neck pain; status post fall. At issue, is the request for authorization for physical therapy, low back 6 sessions. Notes indicate that the patient underwent therapy in late March and found the therapy "very helpful for her." A follow-up with her treating physician stated that her "symptoms were the same."

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical Therapy, Low Back, 6 sessions: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 298, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 98 of 127. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low Back Chapter, 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, 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. Furthermore, it is unclear how many therapy sessions the patient has already undergone making it impossible to determine if the patient has exceeded the maximum number recommended by guidelines for their diagnosis. In light of the above issues, the currently requested additional physical therapy is not medically necessary.