

Case Number:	CM15-0167496		
Date Assigned:	09/08/2015	Date of Injury:	11/08/2014
Decision Date:	10/07/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/05/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/25/2015

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 44-year-old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 11-8-14. He reported initial complaint was of his neck and back. The injured worker was diagnosed as having grade 1 spondylolisthesis L4-L5 with moderate disc herniation causing central and bilateral neuroforaminal stenosis; lumbosacral sprain with radicular symptoms; moderate disc herniation L3-L4 with stenosis; right superior and inferior pubic ramus fracture. Treatment to date has included physical therapy; TENs unit; acupuncture; chiropractic therapy; medications. Diagnostic studies include MRI lumbar spine (2-12-15); x-rays right hip (3-13-15); MRI pelvis (3-13-15). Currently, the PR-2 notes dated 7-7-15 indicate the injured worker presents for a follow-up of headaches, joint pain and swelling. She reports ongoing pain in the right upper thigh and groin region. She also reports lower back pain with radiation to the bilateral thighs. The provider documents MRI studies revealing moderate disc herniation at L3-4 and L4-5 with stenosis as well as spondylolisthesis at L4-5. She remains symptomatic despite receiving chiropractic treatment. She continues to have pain in the lower lumbar region with radiculopathy in the lower extremity. She has had conservative measures and he is recommending she had a lumbar epidural steroid injection. He would also like her to continue chiropractic treatment to reduce the musculoskeletal pain and restore function. The provider is requesting authorization of Additional chiropractic 6 sessions hip and pelvis region and Lumbar epidural injection at L4-L5.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Additional chiropractic 6 sessions hip and pelvis region: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 58-60.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines manual manipulation Page(s): 58-59.

Decision rationale: Recommended for chronic pain if caused by musculoskeletal conditions. Manual Therapy is widely used in the treatment of musculoskeletal pain. The intended goal or effect of Manual Medicine is the achievement of positive symptomatic or objective measurable gains in functional improvement that facilitate progression in the patient's therapeutic exercise program and return to productive activities. Manipulation is manual therapy that moves a joint beyond the physiologic range-of-motion but not beyond the anatomic range-of-motion. Low back: Recommended as an option. Therapeutic care: Trial of 6 visits over 2 weeks, with evidence of objective functional improvement, total of up to 18 visits over 6-8 weeks. Elective/maintenance care: Not medically necessary. Recurrences/flare-ups: Need to reevaluate treatment success, if RTW achieved then 1-2 visits every 4-6 months. Ankle & Foot: Not recommended. Carpal tunnel syndrome: Not recommended. Forearm, Wrist, & Hand: Not recommended. Knee: Not recommended. Treatment Parameters from state guidelines a. Time to produce effect: 4 to 6 treatments. Manual manipulation is recommended form of treatment for chronic pain. However, the requested amount of therapy sessions is in excess of the recommendations per the California MTUS. The California MTUS states there should be not more than 6 visits over 2 weeks and documented evidence of functional improvement before continuation of therapy. Previous sessions have not produced documented significant improvements in pain and function and therefore the request is not certified. Therefore, the requested treatment is not medically necessary.

Lumbar epidural injection at L4-L5: Overturned

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines epidural steroid injections Page(s): 46.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on epidural steroid injections (ESI) states: Criteria for the use of Epidural steroid injections: Note: The purpose of ESI is to reduce pain and inflammation, restoring range of motion and thereby facilitating progress in more active treatment programs, and avoiding surgery, but this treatment alone offers no significant long-term functional benefit. 1) Radiculopathy must be documented by physical examination and corroborated by imaging studies and/or electrodiagnostic testing. 2) Initially unresponsive to conservative treatment (exercises, physical methods, NSAIDs and muscle relaxants). 3) Injections should be performed using fluoroscopy (live x-ray) for guidance. 4) If used for diagnostic purposes, a maximum of two injections should be performed. A second block is not recommended if there is inadequate response to the first block. Diagnostic blocks should be at an interval of at least one to two weeks between injections. 5) No more than two nerve root levels should be injected using transforaminal blocks. 6) No more than one interlaminar level should be injected at one session. 7) In the therapeutic phase, repeat blocks should be based on continued objective documented pain and functional improvement, including at least 50% pain relief with associated reduction of medication use for six to eight weeks, with

a general recommendation of no more than 4 blocks per region per year. (Manchikanti, 2003) (CMS, 2004) (Boswell, 2007) 8) Current research does not support a "series-of-three" injections in either the diagnostic or therapeutic phase. We recommend no more than 2 ESI injections. The patient has the documentation of back pain with radiculopathy and criteria as listed above have been met and therefore the request is certified. Therefore, the requested treatment is medically necessary.