

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0168168		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/14/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/16/2011
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/13/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	07/30/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	08/26/2015

### 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

### 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 59 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on April 16, 2011. She reported injury to her right foot. The injured worker was currently diagnosed as having pain in joint of ankle and foot, reflex sympathetic dystrophy of lower limb and skin sensation disturbance. Treatment to date has included diagnostic studies and medication. On July 23, 2015, the injured worker complained of left hip, right ankle, left foot and right foot pain. There was radiation of pain noted to the left foot, right foot and left heel. The pain was rated as a 6 on a 1-10 pain scale. Physical examination of the lumbar spine revealed tenderness on palpation. Range of motion was restricted with flexion limited to 90 degrees limited by pain and extension limited to 20 degrees limited by pain. The treatment plan included a follow-up visit, medication, modified work duty and six sessions of physical therapy for the lumbar spine to improve functional abilities and decrease pain. On July 30, 2015, utilization review denied a request for six sessions of physical therapy for the lumbar spine.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Physical therapy 6 sessions for lumbar spine:** Upheld

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

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Physical Medicine.

**Decision rationale:** Time-limited care plan with specific defined goals, assessment of functional benefit with modification of ongoing treatment based upon the patient's progress in meeting those goals and the provider's continued monitoring of successful outcome is stressed by MTUS guidelines. Therapy is considered medically necessary when the services require the judgment, knowledge, and skills of a qualified physical therapist due to the complexity and sophistication of the therapy and the physical condition of the patient. Submitted reports have no acute flare-up or specific physical limitations to support for physical/ occupational therapy. The Chronic Pain Guidelines allow for 9-10 visits of therapy with fading of treatment to an independent self-directed home program. It is unclear how many PT sessions have been completed; however, the submitted reports have not identified clear specific functional improvement in ADLs, functional status, or decrease in medication and medical utilization nor have there been a change in neurological compromise or red-flag findings demonstrated from the formal physical therapy already rendered to support further treatment. Submitted reports have also not adequately demonstrated the indication to support for excessive quantity of PT sessions without extenuating circumstances established beyond the guidelines. The Physical therapy 6 sessions for lumbar spine is not medically necessary and appropriate.