

Case Number:	CM15-0197942		
Date Assigned:	10/13/2015	Date of Injury:	06/30/2014
Decision Date:	11/20/2015	UR Denial Date:	09/08/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/08/2015

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 58 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 3-30-2014. The injured worker was diagnosed as having lumbar myalgia and lumbar myospasms. Treatment to date was not documented. Currently (8-24-2015), the injured worker complains of ongoing low back pain, dizziness, headaches, and nosebleeds. Exam of the lumbar spine noted tenderness, guarding and spasm over the right paravertebral regions bilaterally, seated straight leg raise positive on the right, Romberg test positive, trigger points in the bilateral paraspinal muscles (right greater than left), 4 of 5 strength with flexion, extension and bilateral lateral bending, and restricted range of motion due to pain. Physical therapy for the lumbar spine was requested to restore flexibility, strength, range of motion, and endurance. Medications were prescribed and he was able to return to work with restrictions. Per the Request for Authorization dated 8-24-2015, the treatment plan included physical therapy for the lumbar spine, 3x4, modified to physical therapy for the lumbar spine x6 by Utilization Review on 9-08-2015.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical therapy for the lumbar spine 3 x 4: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS General Approaches 2004, Section(s): General Approach to Initial Assessment and Documentation, and Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Physical Medicine.

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

Decision rationale: Review indicates the request for PT was modified for 6 sessions. Physical 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. However, there is no clear measurable evidence of progress with the PT treatment already rendered including milestones of increased ROM, strength, and functional capacity. Review of submitted physician reports show no evidence of functional benefit, unchanged chronic symptom complaints, clinical findings, and functional status. There is no evidence documenting functional baseline with clear goals to be reached and the patient striving to reach those goals. The Chronic Pain Guidelines allow for visits of physical therapy with fading of treatment to an independent self-directed home program. It appears the employee has received significant therapy sessions without demonstrated evidence of functional improvement to allow for additional therapy treatments. There is no report of acute flare-up, new injuries, or change in symptom or clinical findings to support for formal PT in a patient that has been instructed on a home exercise program for this chronic 2014 injury. Submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication to support further physical therapy when prior treatment rendered has not resulted in any functional benefit. The Physical therapy for the lumbar spine 3 x 4 is not medically necessary and appropriate.