

Case Number:	CM15-0020938		
Date Assigned:	02/10/2015	Date of Injury:	05/25/2010
Decision Date:	04/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/20/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/03/2015

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, Georgia
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 50 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on May 25, 2010. The injured worker has reported back pain. The diagnoses have included lumbar sprain/strain, lumbar spine radiculopathy, myofascial pain syndrome, failed back pain syndrome and lumbar disc displacement. Treatment to date has included medications, physical therapy, injection, acupuncture and a left lumbar four-lumbar five microdiscectomy in 2010. Current documentation dated December 30, 2014 notes that the injured worker complained of low back pain with radiation to the left leg. Physical examination of the lumbar spine revealed tenderness and a positive straight leg raise test. Examination of the left lower extremity revealed normal strength and range of motion. On January 20, 2015 Utilization Review non-certified a request for a functional restoration program evaluation. The MTUS, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, were cited.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Functional Restoration Program Evaluation: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Functional restoration programs (FRPs) Page(s): 31-32, 49.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Section 2
Page(s): 30-32.

Decision rationale: CA MTUS considers functional restoration programs recommended where there is access to programs with proven successful outcomes, for patients with conditions that put them at risk of delayed recovery when the patient is motivated to improve and return to work, and meets the patient selection criteria outlined next. These criteria include ALL of the following: (1) An adequate and thorough evaluation has been made, including baseline functional testing so follow-up with the same test can note functional improvement; (2) Previous methods of treating chronic pain have been unsuccessful and there is an absence of other options likely to result in significant clinical improvement; (3) The patient has a significant loss of ability to function independently resulting from the chronic pain; (4) The patient is not a candidate where surgery or other treatments would clearly be warranted (if a goal of treatment is to prevent or avoid controversial or optional surgery, a trial of 10 visits may be implemented to assess whether surgery may be avoided); (5) The patient exhibits motivation to change, and is willing to forgo secondary gains, including disability payments to effect this change; & (6) Negative predictors of success above have been addressed. Negative predictors of success include (1) a negative relationship with the employer/supervisor; (2) poor work adjustment and satisfaction; (3) a negative outlook about future employment; (4) high levels of psychosocial distress (higher pretreatment levels of depression, pain and disability); (5) involvement in financial disability disputes; (6) greater rates of smoking; (7) duration of pre-referral disability time; (8) prevalence of opioid use; and (9) pretreatment levels of pain. Integrative summary reports that include treatment goals, progress assessment and stage of treatment, must be made available upon request and at least on a bi-weekly basis during the course of the treatment program. Treatment is not suggested for longer than 2 weeks without evidence of demonstrated efficacy as documented by subjective and objective gains. In this case, the claimant's medical history well documents that he meets these criteria and a functional restoration program evaluation is indicated.