MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM15-0023926		
Date Assigned:	02/13/2015	Date of Injury:	08/05/2014
Decision Date:	04/06/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/14/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/09/2015

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: Arizona, California
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 53-year-old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 8/5/14. She has reported low back and right lower extremity pain related to lifting a heavy object. The diagnoses have included lumbar degenerative disc disease, lumbar strain and lumbosacral neuritis. Treatment to date has included lumbar MRI, physical therapy, TENS unit and oral medications. As of the PR2 dated 1/8/15, the treating physician reported positive back pain, but no joint swelling or muscle weakness. He indicated pain in the facet joints that is worse with movement. The treating physician requested physical therapy x 12 sessions. On 1/14/15 Utilization Review modified a request for physical therapy x 12 sessions to physical therapy x 8 sessions. The utilization review physician cited the MTUS guidelines for chronic pain medical treatment. On 2/4/15, the injured worker submitted an application for IMR for review of physical therapy x 12 sessions.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical therapy x 12 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): 299,Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines physical medicine Page(s): 98-99.

Decision rationale: According to the MTUS guidelines, therapy is recommended in a fading frequency. They allow for fading of treatment frequency (from up to 3 visits per week to 1 or less), plus active self-directed home Physical Medicine. The following diagnoses have their associated recommendation for number of visits. Myalgia and myositis, unspecified 9-10 visits over 8 weeks. Neuralgia, neuritis, and radiculitis, unspecified 8-10 visits over 4 weeks. Reflex sympathetic dystrophy (CRPS) 24 visits over 16 weeks. According to the ACOEM guidelines: Physical and Therapeutic Interventions are recommended for 1 to 2 visits for education. This education is to be utilized for at home exercises which include stretching, relaxation, strengthening exercises, etc. There is no documentation to indicate that the sessions provided cannot be done independently by the claimant at home. The claimant had already received greater than 8 sessions of prior therapy. Consequently, additional therapy sessions are not medically necessary.