

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0026275		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	02/18/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/13/1990
<b>Decision Date:</b>	03/30/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	01/14/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	02/11/2015

### 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: TR, California, Virginia  
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine

### 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 78 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 04/13/1990. The diagnoses have included displacement of lumbar intervertebral disc, degeneration of lumbosacral intervertebral disc, chronic pain syndrome, and thoracic or lumbosacral neuritis or radiculitis. Noted treatments to date have included lumbar epidural steroid injection, transforaminal steroid injection, and medications. Diagnostics to date have included MRI of the lumbar spine on 05/22/2014 which showed a 2mm retrolisthesis of L4 with respect to L5, a 3mm retrolisthesis of L5 with respect to S1, a slight 2mm retrolisthesis of L3 with respect to L4, diffuse disc bulge/broad based protrusion, and scoliosis. In a progress note dated 01/06/2015, the injured worker presented with complaints of back pain. The treating physician reported the injured worker had decreased pain for 3 weeks following a previous lumbar epidural steroid injection. Utilization Review determination on 01/14/2015 non-certified the request for Lumbar Epidural Steroid Injection, as an outpatient citing Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Lumbar Epidural Steroid injection #1:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural Steroid injection Page(s): 46.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural Steroid Injections Page(s): 46.

**Decision rationale:** Per the MTUS Chronic Pain Guidelines (page 46), most current guidelines recommend no more than 2 epidural steroid injections. In order to warrant injections, radiculopathy must be documented by physical examination and corroborated by imaging studies and/or electrodiagnostic testing. The MTUS criteria for epidural steroid injections also include unresponsiveness to conservative treatment (exercises, physical methods, and medications); the patient's record does not adequately reflect documented unresponsiveness to conservative modalities; it also does not provide objective evidence of functional improvement after the prior steroid injection. If epidural injections are to be utilized as a therapeutic modality, no more than two injections are recommended, and repeat injections 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. The MTUS clearly states that 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. Given the recommendations for epidural steroid injections as written in the MTUS guidelines, the request for an additional epidural steroid injection at this time is not medically necessary.