

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0026998		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	02/19/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	10/19/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	04/16/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	01/16/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	02/12/2015

### 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: Emergency 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 37 year old female injured worker suffered and industrial injury on 10/19/2012. The diagnoses were lumbago, cervical disc herniation, chronic cervicgia and mood disorder. The diagnostic studies were computerized tomography myelogram, computerized tomography of the brain. The treatments were cervical fusion and medications. The treating provider reported chronic neck and mid back pain. She also reported headaches and continued numbness to her hands. On exam, there was tenderness along the thoracic spine. Utilization Review Determination on 1/16/2015 non-certified MRI of the thoracic spine, citing MTUS, ACOEM, ODG.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**MRI of the thoracic spine:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines Treatment for Workers' Compensation, Online Edition.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 177-178, 182.

**Decision rationale:** The requested MRI of the thoracic spine is not medically necessary. American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM), 2nd Edition, (2004), Chapter 8, Neck and Upper Back Complaints, Special Studies and Diagnostic and Treatment Considerations, Pages 177-178 and 182, note the criteria for ordering imaging studies are: "Emergence of a red flag, Physiologic evidence of tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction, Failure to progress in a strengthening program intended to avoid surgery, Clarification of the anatomy prior to an invasive procedure; and MRI or CT to validate diagnosis of nerve root compromise, based on clear history and physical examination findings, in preparation for invasive procedure." The injured worker has chronic neck and mid back pain. She also reported headaches and continued numbness to her hands. On exam, there was tenderness along the thoracic spine. The treating physician has not documented: the emergence of a red flag condition; physiologic evidence of neurologic dysfunction; indication of an impending surgical intervention. The criteria noted above not having been met, MRI of the thoracic spine is not medically necessary.