

Case Number:	CM15-0037856		
Date Assigned:	03/06/2015	Date of Injury:	06/10/2008
Decision Date:	04/14/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/28/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/27/2015

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: New Jersey, Michigan, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Neuromuscular 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 35 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 6/10/2008. The diagnoses have included lumbar spine surgery and right shoulder strain. Treatment to date has included L4-S1 decompression and 360 degree fusion on 6/03/2011. Currently, the IW complains of lower back pain, neck pain and right shoulder pain. Objective findings included diffuse tenderness to the thoracic spine and diffuse tenderness to the right shoulder. Physiotherapy, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and EMG (electromyography)/NCV (nerve conduction studies) have been recommended. On 1/28/2015, Utilization Review non-certified a request for a pain management follow-up office visit (lumbar spine/right shoulder) noting that the clinical information submitted for review fails to meet the evidence based guidelines for the requested service. The ACOEM Guidelines were cited. On 2/27/2015, the injured worker submitted an application for IMR for review of pain management follow-up office visit (lumbar spine/right shoulder).

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Pain Management Follow-Up Office Visit (Lumbar Spine/Right Shoulder): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Assessing Red Flags and Indication for Immediate Referral, Chronic pain programs, early intervention
Page(s): 171, 32-33.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, the presence of red flags may indicate the need for specialty consultation. In addition, the requesting physician should provide a documentation supporting the medical necessity for a pain management evaluation with a specialist. The documentation should include the reasons, the specific goals and end for using the expertise of a specialist. In the chronic pain programs, early intervention section of MTUS guidelines stated: Recommendations for identification of patients that may benefit from early intervention via a multidisciplinary approach : (a) The patient's response to treatment falls outside of the established norms for their specific diagnosis without a physical explanation to explain symptom severity. (b) The patient exhibits excessive pain behavior and/or complaints compared to that expected from the diagnosis. (c) There is a previous medical history of delayed recovery. (d) The patient is not a candidate where surgery or other treatments would clearly be warranted. (e) Inadequate employer support. (f) Loss of employment for greater than 4 weeks. The most discernible indication of at risk status is lost time from work of 4 to 6 weeks. (Mayer 2003) . There is no clear documentation that the patient needs a pain management evaluation as per MTUS criteria. There is no clear documentation that the patient had delayed recovery and a response to medications that falls outside the established norm. The provider did not document the reasons, the specific goals and end for using the expertise of a specialist. Therefore, the request for Follow up appointment with Pain Management specialist is not medically necessary.