

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0043150		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	03/13/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	11/11/2011
<b>Decision Date:</b>	04/17/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	02/19/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	03/07/2015

### 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: Massachusetts

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Pain Management

### 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 47 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 11/11/11. She reported lumbar spine, right hip, right lower extremity, right and right foot injury. The injured worker was diagnosed as having lumbosacral spine sprain/strain, right lower extremity radiculopathy symptoms and thoracic spine sprain/strain. Treatment to date has included physical therapy, acupuncture, chiropractic treatment and oral medications including NSAIDS and topical creams. Nerve conduction studies and (EMG) Electromyogram studies were performed on 1/9/15. Currently, the injured worker complains of constant low back pain with radiation to right lower extremity increased with walking. The injured worker is currently receiving physical therapy, chiropractic treatment and acupuncture and is benefitting from each of them. She has also improved functionally since her last visit. The current treatment includes physical therapy, acupuncture and continuation of Naproxen and Prilosec.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Physical therapy 3x4 for the lumbar/thoracic spine:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 99. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) (1) Chronic pain, Physical medicine treatment. (2) Preface, Physical Therapy Guidelines.

**Decision rationale:** The claimant is more than 3 years status post work-related injury and continues to be treated for chronic low back pain with radicular symptoms. Prior treatments have been extensive, including previous physical therapy treatments. In terms of physical therapy treatment for chronic pain, guidelines recommend a six visit clinical trial with a formal reassessment prior to continuing therapy. In this case, the number of visits requested is in excess of that recommended and therefore not medically necessary. Additionally, the claimant has already had physical therapy. Patients are expected to continue active therapies at home. Compliance with a home exercise program would be expected and would not require continued skilled physical therapy oversight. Providing additional skilled physical therapy services would not reflect a fading of treatment frequency and would promote dependence on therapy provided treatments. The claimant has no other identified impairment that would preclude performing such a program.