

Case Number:	CM15-0043613		
Date Assigned:	03/13/2015	Date of Injury:	10/30/2006
Decision Date:	04/23/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/03/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/09/2015

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: North Carolina

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 68 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 10/30/2006. On provider visit dated 10/28/2014 the injured worker has reported lower back pain with radicular symptoms into right and left leg. On examination she was noted to have lumbar spine tightness and spasm along paraspinal muscles bilaterally and a decreased range of motion. On progress noted dated 2/19/2015, the diagnoses have included lumbar spine sprain/strain. Treatment to date has included MRI, physical therapy and medication.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Epidural Steroid Injection (ESI), Lumbar L4-L5: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines epidural steroid injections Page(s): 46.

Decision rationale: Criteria for the use of Epidural steroid injections: Note: 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. 1) Radiculopathy must be documented by physical examination and corroborated by imaging studies and/or electrodiagnostic testing. 2) Initially unresponsive to conservative treatment (exercises, physical methods, NSAIDs and muscle relaxants). 3) Injections should be performed using fluoroscopy (live x-ray) for guidance. 4) If used for diagnostic purposes, a maximum of two injections should be performed. A second block is not recommended if there is inadequate response to the first block. Diagnostic blocks should be at an interval of at least one to two weeks between injections. 5) No more than two nerve root levels should be injected using transforaminal blocks. 6) No more than one interlaminar level should be injected at one session. 7) In the therapeutic phase, repeat blocks 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, with a general recommendation of no more than 4 blocks per region per year. (Manchikanti, 2003) (CMS, 2004) (Boswell, 2007) 8) Current research does not support a "series-of-three" injections in either the diagnostic or therapeutic phase. We recommend no more than 2 ESI injections. The patient has the documentation of low back pain and lumbar disc herniation and there is documentation of radiculopathy on the physical exam. There is no included corroboration by imaging studies or EM besides mention of an MRI performed in 2011. There is no plan for more active treatment programs as a result of epidural steroid injection. For these reasons criteria as set forth above per the California MTUS have not been met. The request is not medically necessary.