

Case Number:	CM15-0045526		
Date Assigned:	03/17/2015	Date of Injury:	06/14/1994
Decision Date:	04/20/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/10/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/10/2015

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 61-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on June 14, 1994. The mechanism of injury is not indicated in the medical records available for this review. The injured worker was diagnosed as having status post lumbar fusion, status post removal of hardware of the lumbar spine. Treatment to date has included multiple back surgeries, medications, x-rays, and a home exercise program. A PR-2 on February 23, 2015, indicates he reports daily back pain. He reported the pain being controlled by medications and heat applications. The records indicate x-rays of the thoracic spine were done the same day and showed stable hardware position. X-rays of the lumbar spine performed the same day showed a solid fusion. The treatment plan includes: Thermacare heat wraps, Omeprazole 20mg, Ultram 50mg, Flexeril 10mg, Valium 5mg, and Lyrica 100mg. The request for authorization is for retrospective date of service 3/14/13, H-wave unit with supplies (months rental) #3.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

(Retrospective Dos: 03/14/13) H-Wave Unit With Supplies (Months Rental), Qty: 3.00:
 Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines
 Page(s): 17.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines H-wave therapy Page(s): 117.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on H-wave stimulation therapy states: H-wave stimulation (HWT) Not recommended as an isolated intervention, but a one-month home-based trial of H Wave stimulation may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option for diabetic neuropathic pain (Julka, 1998) (Kumar, 1997) (Kumar, 1998), or chronic soft tissue inflammation if used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration, and only following failure of initially recommended conservative care, including recommended physical therapy (i.e., exercise) and medications, plus transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS). In a recent retrospective study suggesting effectiveness of the H-wave device, the patient selection criteria included a physician documented diagnosis of chronic soft-tissue injury or neuropathic pain in an upper or lower extremity or the spine that was unresponsive to conventional therapy, including physical therapy, medications, and TENS. (Blum, 2006) (Blum2, 2006) There is no evidence that H-Wave is more effective as an initial treatment when compared to TENS for analgesic effects. A randomized controlled trial comparing analgesic effects of H wave therapy and TENS on pain threshold found that there were no differences between the different modalities or HWT frequencies. (McDowell2, 1999) [Note: This may be a different device than the H-Wave approved for use in the US.] The patient is currently using H-wave therapy with no documentation of significant improvement in pain or function. Therefore, the request is not certified.