

Case Number:	CM15-0080905		
Date Assigned:	05/01/2015	Date of Injury:	01/15/2015
Decision Date:	06/05/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/22/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/28/2015

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, Texas, Florida

Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, Pain Management, Hospice & Palliative 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 47 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 01/15/2015. The initial complaints or symptoms included low back pain/injury from a fall. The injured worker was diagnosed as having lumbar muscle strain and lumbar vertebral fracture. Treatment to date has included conservative care, medications, MRIs, physical therapy, and lumbar epidural steroid injection (03/13/2015). Currently, the injured worker complains of constant, sharp, throbbing and burning low back pain with radiation into the bilateral lower extremities. The injured worker had undergone an epidural steroid injection to the lumbar spine on 03/13/2015 with pain relief that lasted 2 days. The diagnoses include lumbar radiculopathy, lumbar disc degeneration, and chronic low back pain. The request for authorization included a lumbar epidural steroid injection at the L4-L5 level.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

1 Lumbar epidural steroid injection at the L4-L5 level: 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 9792.20-9792.26 Page(s): 46 of 127.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for repeat Lumbar epidural steroid injection, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that epidural injections are recommended as an option for treatment of radicular pain, defined as pain in dermatomal distribution with corroborative findings of radiculopathy, and failure of conservative treatment. Guidelines recommend that no more than one interlaminar level, or to transforaminal levels, should be injected at one session. Regarding repeat epidural injections, guidelines state that 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. Within the documentation available for review, there is no indication of at least 50% pain relief with associated reduction of medication use for 6 to 8 weeks as well as functional improvement from previous epidural injections. As such, the currently requested repeat lumbar epidural steroid injection is not medically necessary.