

Case Number:	CM15-0087136		
Date Assigned:	05/11/2015	Date of Injury:	02/13/2010
Decision Date:	06/11/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/07/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/06/2015

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 40-year-old male injured worker suffered an industrial injury on 02/13/2010. The diagnoses included lumbar and cervical radiculopathy degenerative disc disease of the cervical and lumbar spine, cervicalgia, and osteoarthritis of facet joints. The diagnostics included lumbar and cervical magnetic resonance imaging. The injured worker had been treated with medications and cervical epidural steroid injections. On 3/16/2015 the treating provider reported constant pain in the neck, radiating down the left arm and now with severe radiating pain with burning up to the top of the head. He also reported low back pain that radiated down the left extremity. Without medications, the pain is 8/10 and with medications is 7/10. The cervical epidural steroid injections granted up to 70% relief lasting for 6 months that gradually returned. The treatment plan included MRI of the cervical spine.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MRI of the cervical Spine without contrast: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 177-178.

Decision rationale: The ACOEM chapter on neck and upper back complaints and special diagnostic studies states: Criteria for ordering imaging studies are: Emergence of a red flag; Physiologic evidence of tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction; Failure to progress in a strengthening program intended to avoid surgery; Clarification of the anatomy prior to an invasive procedure. The provided progress notes fails to show any documentation of indications for imaging studies of the neck as outlined above per the ACOEM. There was no emergence of red flag. The neck pain was characterized as unchanged. The physical exam noted no evidence of new tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction. There is no planned invasive procedure. Therefore, criteria have not been met for a MRI of the neck and the request is not medically necessary.