

Case Number:	CM15-0088155		
Date Assigned:	05/12/2015	Date of Injury:	09/02/1999
Decision Date:	06/18/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/07/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/07/2015

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: California
 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 58 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 9/2/1999. He reported injury to the lower back. The injured worker was diagnosed as having lumbar fusion history, chronic lumbar spine pain, lower extremity radicular pain, obesity and diabetes. There is no record of a recent diagnostic study. Recent treatment to date has included medication management. In a progress note dated 2/23/2015 and 3/3/2015, the injured worker complains of low back pain that radiated in the left leg. The treating physician is requesting Gabapentin 300 mg #90 and continuing gym membership at the [REDACTED] for pool exercises. The injured worker is 5 foot, nine inches and currently weights 235 pounds which would equate to BMI of 34.7.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Gabapentin 300 MG #90: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Antiepilepsy drugs (AEDs) Page(s): 16-21.

Decision rationale: According to the MTUS guidelines, Antiepilepsy drugs (AEDs) are recommended for chronic neuropathic pain. Gabapentin is considered first line in the treatment of chronic neuropathic pain. In this case, the injured worker is followed for chronic neuropathic pain status post lumbar fusion, and the request for this medication is supported per the MTUS guidelines. The injured worker is using this medication with benefit and there is no evidence of side effects. The request for Gabapentin 300 MG #90 is medically necessary and appropriate.

Continuing Gym Membership at [REDACTED] for Pool Exercises: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aquatic therapy Page(s): 22.

Decision rationale: According to the MTUS guidelines, aquatic therapy is recommended as an optional form of exercise therapy, where available, as an alternative to land-based physical therapy. Aquatic therapy (including swimming) can minimize the effects of gravity, so it is specifically recommended where reduced weight bearing is desirable, for example extreme obesity. In this case, the injured worker is status post lumbar fusion and has current body mass index of 34.7. The guidelines support aquatic therapy where reduced weight bearing is desirable, for example extreme obesity. However, the request is for continuing gym membership for pool exercises, and the medical records do not establish specific objective functional gains obtained from prior pool exercises to support continued access to the pool. The request for Continuing Gym Membership at [REDACTED] for Pool Exercises is not medically necessary or appropriate.