

Case Number:	CM15-0244996		
Date Assigned:	12/24/2015	Date of Injury:	08/09/2011
Decision Date:	01/29/2016	UR Denial Date:	11/16/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/16/2015

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: Texas, Florida, California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational 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 53 year old female injured worker suffered an industrial injury on 8-9-2011. The diagnoses included chronic lumbar radiculopathy, degeneration of lumbar intervertebral disc and myalgia. On 10-21-2015 the treating provider reported continued significant back pain rated 10 out of 10. On exam the provider noted progressive lumbar pain with radiation to the left leg with muscles spasms. The provider noted x-rays were taken 10-2-2015 that revealed loss of lordosis of the lumbar spine. The provider recommended a Dexa scan of the lumbar spine and Vitamin D level study. Medications in use were Valium, Oxycontin, Seroquel, Norco and Soma. The medical record did not include specific indications for the requested treatments. The Request for Authorization date was 11-10-2015. The Utilization Review on 11-16-2015 determined non-certification for Outpatient Dexa Scan of The Lumbar Spine and Vitamin D Level Study.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Outpatient Dexa Scan of The Lumbar Spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG).

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, Low back, bone scans.

Decision rationale: This claimant was injured in 2011. There was chronic lumbar radiculopathy. There is progressive lumbar pain. There were no indicates for the requests treatment. Regarding bone scans in general, the ODG notes: Not recommended, except for bone infection, cancer, or arthritis. (deVlam, 2000) (Littenberg, 1995) (ACR, 2000) [Note: This is different from the 1994 AHCPR Low Back Guideline, which said "Recommend if no improvement after 1 month for Bone scan." (Bigos, 1999)] Bone scans use intravenous administration of tracer medications to show radioactive uptake to detect metastases, infection, inflammatory arthropathies, significant fracture, or other significant bone trauma. They are also used to assess for osteoporosis. It is not clear why the scan even if used for osteoporosis is medically essential for medical care. The request is not clinically medically necessary.

Vitamin D Level Study: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG).

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/bdt/>.

Decision rationale: The MTUS and ODG are silent on blood tests. Other resources were examined. The National Institutes of Health notes that blood tests check for certain diseases and conditions, the function of the organs, show how well treatments are working, diagnose diseases and conditions such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, anemia, and coronary heart disease, find out if there are risk factors for heart disease, check whether medicines are working, or if blood is clotting. In this case, the doctor does not disclose the basis for the Vitamin D levels. Also, low Vitamin D is so common in the United States due to people spending less and less time outdoors. It is not clear why this test is medically essential to injury clinical care. The request is not medically necessary.