

Case Number:	CM13-0009587		
Date Assigned:	03/24/2014	Date of Injury:	11/07/2011
Decision Date:	04/30/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/01/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/12/2013

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. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Occupational Medicine, and is licensed to practice in California. 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

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 patient is a 39-year-old male with an 11/7/11 date of injury. Subjective complaints include a high level of pain in the mid back and low back. Current diagnoses include cervical disc protrusion and ongoing thoracic and lumbar pain, and treatment to date has been physical therapy. The number of physical therapy sessions completed to date cannot be determined. In addition, there is no documentation of functional deficits and functional goals. Furthermore, there is no documentation of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions, an increase in activity tolerance, and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services with previous physical therapy.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

PHYSICAL THERAPY CERVICAL/THORACIC/LUMBAR: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 98-99. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 98. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines

Decision rationale: The MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines support a brief course of physical medicine for patients with chronic pain, not to exceed 10 visits over 4-8

weeks with the allowance for the fading of treatment frequency and the transition to an active self-directed program of independent home physical medicine/therapeutic exercise. The MTUS identifies that any treatment intervention should not be continued in the absence of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions, an increase in activity tolerance, and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services. The Official Disability Guidelines recommend a limited course of physical therapy for patients with a diagnosis of displacement of cervical intervertebral disc not to exceed 10 visits over 8 weeks. The ODG also notes that patients should be formally assessed after a six-visit clinical trial to see if the patient is moving in a positive direction, no direction, or a negative direction prior to continuing with the physical therapy, and, when treatment requests exceeds guideline recommendations, the physician must provide a statement of exceptional factors to justify going outside of guideline parameters. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of cervical disc protrusion and ongoing thoracic and lumbar pain. In addition, there is documentation of previous physical therapy. However, there is no documentation of the number of physical therapy sessions completed to date and, if the number of sessions completed to date exceed guidelines, a statement of exceptional factors to justify going outside of guideline parameters. In addition, there is no documentation of functional deficits and functional goals. Furthermore, there is no documentation of functional benefit or improvement with previous physical therapy. Finally, there is no documentation of a specified frequency and duration of the requested physical therapy. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for physical therapy is not medically necessary.