

Case Number:	CM14-0116480		
Date Assigned:	09/26/2014	Date of Injury:	09/09/2003
Decision Date:	10/29/2014	UR Denial Date:	06/27/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/24/2014

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 Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Pain 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 injured worker is a 52-year-old male who reported an injury on 09/09/2003 when, while performing his customary duties, he was stacking boxes on a pallet, when he felt a hernia developing on his abdomen near his navel. He reported it to a supervisor and continued to work his normal duties. The diagnoses were diabetes, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, gastritis/GERD secondary to medications, constipation secondary to medications, obesity, and orthopedic diagnosis. Past treatments were physical therapy, chiropractic sessions, core muscle strengthening, acupuncture, and medications. The physical examination on 04/14/2014 revealed that the injured worker had complained of acid reflux. He continued to take medications to control pain. The injured worker still complained of constipation even though he takes a stool softener. The injured worker had a second inguinal hernia repair approximately 6 months prior. Medications were omeprazole, Vicodin, Relafen, Zanaflex, Docuprene and Gabapentin. The injured worker gets diabetic medication from Mexico. An MRI of the lumbar spine revealed early disc desiccation noted at the L4-5 and L5-S1 levels. Modic type 2 endplate degenerative changes were noted at the L1-2 and L3-4 levels. Schmorl's was noted at the L4-5 level. At the L5-S1, there was a broad-based disc protrusion effacing the thecal sac. The L5 exiting nerve roots were unremarkable. The examination of the extremities revealed femoral pulses were +2 and equal bilaterally. There was no cyanosis, clubbing, or edema of the extremities. The neurological examination revealed cranial nerves 2 through 7 were intact. Deep tendon reflexes were physiologic. Romberg was negative. The treatment plan was to continue medications as directed. The rationale and Request for Authorization were not submitted.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

T3-T4 Thyroid Hormone Lab Test: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Labtestsonline.org:
<http://labtestsonline.org/understanding/analytes/t3/tab/sample>

Decision rationale: The decision for T3-T4 thyroid hormone laboratory test is not medically necessary. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule, ACOEM, and Official Disability Guidelines do not address this request. A search on LabTestsOnline.org revealed that T3-T4 thyroid hormone laboratory tests are used to check for hypothyroidism. This test measures the amount of triiodothyronine, or T3, in the blood. T3 is 1 of 2 major hormones produced by the thyroid gland. The other is called thyroxine, or T4. Their production is regulated by a feedback system. Their production is regulated by a feedback system. When blood levels of thyroid hormones decline, the hypothalamus releases thyrotropin releasing hormone, which stimulates the gland to produce and release thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH). If the thyroid gland produces excessive amounts of T4 and T3, then the person affected may have symptoms associated with hyperthyroidism, such as nervousness, tremors of the hands, weight loss, insomnia, and puffiness around dry, irritated eyes. In some cases, the person's eyes cannot move normally and they may appear to be staring. In other cases, the eyes may appear to bulge. If the thyroid gland produces insufficient amounts of thyroid hormones, then the person may have symptoms associated with hypothyroidism and a slowed metabolism, such as weight gain, dry skin, fatigue, and constipation. Blood levels of hormones may be increased or decreased because of insufficient or excessive production by the thyroid gland, due to thyroid dysfunction, or due to insufficient or excessive TSH production related to pituitary dysfunction. It was not reported that the injured worker was having any type of a thyroid problem. There were no reports of weight loss, weight gain, nervousness, tremors of the hands, or insomnia. The rationale for ordering this lab test was not reported. The clinical information submitted for review does not provide evidence to justify a T3-T4 thyroid hormone lab test. Therefore, this request is not medically necessary.

TSH LabTtest: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Labtestsonline.org:
<http://labtestsonline.org/understanding/analytes/tsh/tab/sample>

Decision rationale: The request for TSH lab test is not medically necessary. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule, ACOEM, and Official Disability Guidelines do not

address this request. Labtestsonline.org was referenced. To screen for and help diagnose thyroid disorders and to monitor treatment of hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism, a TSH laboratory test would be ordered. Thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) is produced by the pituitary gland, a tiny organ located below the brain and behind the sinus cavities. TSH stimulates the thyroid gland to release the hormones thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3) into the blood. These thyroid hormones help control the rate at which the body uses energy. This test measures the amount of TSH in the blood. If the thyroid releases inappropriately large amounts of T4 and T3, the affected person may experience symptoms associated with hyperthyroidism, such as rapid heart rate, weight loss, nervousness, hand tremors, irritated eyes, and difficulty sleeping. Graves' disease is the most common cause of hyperthyroidism. If there is decreased production of thyroid hormones by the thyroid (hypothyroidism), the person may experience symptoms such as weight gain, dry skin, constipation, cold intolerance, and fatigue. Hashimoto thyroiditis is the most common cause of hypothyroidism in the U.S. There were no reports that the injured worker recently had a weight gain, weight loss, dry skin, cold intolerance, difficulty sleeping, nervousness, or hand tremors. There were no other significant factors provided to justify a TSH lab test. Therefore, this request is not medically necessary.

Free T3 Lab Test: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Labtestsonline.org:
<http://labtestsonline.org/understanding/analytes/t3/tab/sample>

Decision rationale: The request for Free T3 lab test is not medically necessary. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule, ACOEM, and Official Disability Guidelines do not address this request. Labtestsonline.org was referenced. The T3 test measures the amount of triiodothyronine, or T3, in the blood. T3 is 1 of 2 major hormones produced by the thyroid gland; the other is called thyroxine, or T4. The thyroid gland is a small butterfly shaped organ that lies flat across the windpipe. The hormones it produces control the rate at which the body uses energy. Their production is regulated by a feedback system. When blood levels of thyroid hormones decline, the hypothalamus releases thyrotropin releasing hormone, which stimulates the pituitary gland to produce and release thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH). TSH then stimulates the thyroid gland to produce and/or release more thyroid hormones. Most of the thyroid hormone produced is T4. This hormone is relatively inactive, but it is converted into the much more active T3 in the liver and other tissues. Separate blood tests can be performed to measure either the total (both bound and unattached) or free (unattached) T3 hormone in the blood. The rationale for ordering a free T3 lab test for the injured worker was not reported. There were no symptoms reported of weight gain, weight loss, fatigue, dry skin, or insomnia. The clinical information submitted for review does not provide evidence to justify a free T3 lab test. Therefore, this request is not medically necessary.

Free Thyroxine Lab Test: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Labtestsonline.org: <http://understanding/analytes/tsh/tab/sample>

Decision rationale: The request for Free Thyroxine lab test is not medically necessary. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule, ACOEM, and Official Disability Guidelines do not address this request. Labtestsonline.org was referenced. Thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) is produced by the pituitary gland, a tiny organ located below the brain and behind the sinus cavities. TSH stimulates the thyroid gland to release the hormones thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3) into the blood. These thyroid hormones help control the rate at which the body uses energy. This test measures the amount of TSH in the blood. TSH, along with its regulatory hormone thyrotropin releasing hormone (TRH), which comes from the hypothalamus, is part of the feedback system that the body uses to maintain stable amounts of thyroid hormones in the blood. When thyroid hormone concentrations decrease, the production of TSH by the pituitary gland is increased. TSH in turn stimulates the production and release of T4 and T3 by the thyroid gland, a small butterfly shaped gland that lies at the base of the throat flat against the windpipe. If the thyroid releases inappropriately large amounts of T4 and T3, the affected person may experience symptoms associated with hyperthyroidism, such as rapid heart rate, weight loss, nervousness, hand tremors, irritated eyes, and difficulty sleeping. Graves' disease is the most common cause of hyperthyroidism. It is a chronic autoimmune disorder in which the affected person's immune system produces antibodies that act like TSH, leading to the production of excessive amounts of thyroid hormone. In response, the pituitary may produce less TSH, usually leading to a low level in the blood. If there is decreased production of thyroid hormones by the thyroid (hypothyroidism), the person may experience symptoms such as weight gain, dry skin, constipation, cold intolerance, and fatigue. Hashimoto thyroiditis is the most common cause of hypothyroidism in the U.S. The rationale for ordering a free thyroxine lab test was not reported. Furthermore, there were no reports of rapid heart rate, weight loss, nervousness, cold intolerance, dry skin, weight gain, or fatigue. The clinical information submitted for review does not provide evidence to justify a free thyroxine lab test. Therefore, this request is not medically necessary.

Total Thyroxine Lab Test: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Labtestsonline.org: <http://understanding/analytes/tsh/tab/sample>

Decision rationale: The request for Total Thyroxine lab test is not medically necessary. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule, ACOEM, and Official Disability Guidelines do not address this request. Labtestsonline.org was referenced. Thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) is produced by the pituitary gland, a tiny organ located below the brain and behind the

sinus cavities. TSH stimulates the thyroid gland to release the hormones thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3) into the blood. These thyroid hormones help control the rate at which the body uses energy. This test measures the amount of TSH in the blood. TSH, along with its regulatory hormone thyrotropin releasing hormone (TRH), which comes from the hypothalamus, is part of the feedback system that the body uses to maintain stable amounts of thyroid hormones in the blood. When thyroid hormone concentrations decrease, the production of TSH by the pituitary gland is increased. TSH in turn stimulates the production and release of T4 and T3 by the thyroid gland, a small butterfly shaped gland that lies at the base of the throat flat against the windpipe. If the thyroid releases inappropriately large amounts of T4 and T3, the affected person may experience symptoms associated with hyperthyroidism, such as rapid heart rate, weight loss, nervousness, hand tremors, irritated eyes, and difficulty sleeping. Graves' disease is the most common cause of hyperthyroidism. It is a chronic autoimmune disorder in which the affected person's immune system produces antibodies that act like TSH, leading to the production of excessive amounts of thyroid hormone. In response, the pituitary may produce less TSH, usually leading to a low level in the blood. If there is decreased production of thyroid hormones by the thyroid (hypothyroidism), the person may experience symptoms such as weight gain, dry skin, constipation, cold intolerance, and fatigue. Hashimoto thyroiditis is the most common cause of hypothyroidism in the U.S. The rationale for ordering a total thyroxine lab test was not reported. Furthermore, there were no reports of rapid heart rate, weight loss, nervousness, cold intolerance, dry skin, weight gain, or fatigue. The clinical information submitted for review does not provide evidence to justify a total thyroxine lab test. Therefore, this request is not medically necessary.

H-Pylori Antibody Lab Test: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Labtestsonline.org:
<http://labtestsonline.org/understanding/analytes/h-pylori/>

Decision rationale: The request for H-Pylori antibody lab test is medically necessary. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule, ACOEM, and Official Disability Guidelines do not address this request. Labtestsonline.org was referenced. This test is looking for evidence of an infection in the gastrointestinal tract by a bacterium named *Helicobacter pylori*. This bacterium is known to be a major cause of peptic ulcer disease and is very common, especially in developing countries. It decreases the stomach's ability to produce mucus, making it prone to acid damage and peptic ulcers. H. Pylori is also associated with the development of gastric (stomach) cancer. The sample is collected depending on the test ordered. It may be a stool sample to look for the H. Pylori antigen or a blood sample drawn from a vein in the arm to detect antibodies to the bacteria. It was reported that the injured worker was having GI events. The injured worker reported he had been suffering from acid reflux for 3 years. Furthermore, the injured worker reported the acid reflux was worse at night and would wake him up, choking him from the reflux. The injured worker has obvious GI symptoms. Therefore, this request is medically necessary.

Urinalysis: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Ongoing Management Page(s): 78.

Decision rationale: The request for Urinalysis is not medically necessary. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule indicates that the use of urine drug screening is for patients with documented issues of abuse, addiction, or poor pain control. It was not reported that the injured worker was having aberrant drug taking behavior. The clinical information submitted for review does not provide evidence to support a urinalysis. Based on the lack of documentation this request is not medically necessary.

Lipid Panel Lab Test: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Labtestsonline.org:
<http://labtestsonline.org/understanding/analytes/triglycerides/>

Decision rationale: The request for Lipid panel lab test is medically necessary. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule, ACOEM, and Official Disability Guidelines do not address this request. Labtestsonline.org was referenced. The lipid panel is used as part of a cardiac risk assessment to help determine an individual's risk of heart disease and to help make decisions about what treatment may be best if there is borderline or high risk. The results of the lipid profile are considered along with other known risk factors of heart disease to develop a plan of treatment and follow-up. Depending on the results and other risk factors, treatment options may involve lifestyle changes such as diet and exercise or lipid lowering medications such as statins. If other risk factors are present or if previous testing revealed a high cholesterol level in the past, more frequent testing with a full lipid profile is recommended. The injured worker does have diabetes and hyperlipidemia and is taking a statin medication. The rationale for ordering this test was not reported. Based on the documentation this request is medically necessary.

Comprehensive Metabolic Panel Lab Test: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Labtestsonline.org:
<http://labtestsonline.org/understanding/analytes/cmp/>

Decision rationale: The request for Comprehensive Metabolic Panel lab test is medically necessary. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule, ACOEM, and Official Disability Guidelines do not address this request. Labtestsonline.org was referenced. The Comprehensive Metabolic Panel (CMP) is used as a broad screening tool to evaluate organ function and check for conditions such as diabetes, liver disease, and kidney disease. The CMP may also be ordered to monitor known conditions, such as hypertension, and to monitor people taking specific medications for any kidney or liver related side effects. If a doctor is interested in following 2 or more individual CMP components, she may order the entire CMP because it offers more information. The injured worker has hypertension, diabetes type 2, and this comprehensive metabolic panel would provide information for these medical conditions. Therefore, this request is medically necessary.

CBC Lab Test: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Labtestsonline.org:
<http://labtestsonline.org/understanding/analytes/cbc/>

Decision rationale: The request for CBC lab test is medically necessary. The complete blood count (CBC) is often used as a broad screening test to determine an individual's general health status. The injured worker has diabetes, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia. Therefore, this request is medically necessary.

Amylase Lab Test: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Labtestsonline.org:
<http://labtestsonline.org/understanding/analytes/amylase/>

Decision rationale: The request for Amylase lab test is not medically necessary. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule, ACOEM, and Official Disability Guidelines do not address this request. Labtestsonline.org was referenced. The blood amylase test is used to help diagnose and monitor acute pancreatitis. It is often ordered along with a lipase test. It may also be used to diagnose and monitor chronic pancreatitis and other disorders that may involve the pancreas. A urine amylase test may also be ordered. Typically, its level will mirror blood amylase concentrations, but both the rise and fall will occur later. It was not reported the rationale for ordering this lab test. The injured worker did not have complaints of any type of abdominal pain, fever, nausea, loss of appetite or ascites. Based on the lack of documentation this request is not medically necessary.

Lipase Lab Test: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Labtestsonline.org:
<http://labtestsonline.org/understanding/analytes/lipase/>

Decision rationale: The request for Lipase lab test is not medically necessary. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule, ACOEM, and Official Disability Guidelines do not address this request. Labtestsonline.org was referenced. The blood test for lipase is most often used, along with an amylase test, to help diagnose and monitor acute pancreatitis. It may also be used to diagnose and monitor chronic pancreatitis and other disorders that involve the pancreas but is not as useful of a test for these conditions because lipase levels remain elevated for longer periods and may not reveal clinical progress. The rationale for ordering a lipase lab test was not reported. The injured worker did not have reports of severe abdominal pain, fever, nausea, and loss of appetite. Based on the lack of documentation this request is not medically necessary.

Glycosylated Hemoglobin Lab Test: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Labtestsonline.org:
<http://labtestsonline.org/understanding/analytes/a1c/>

Decision rationale: The request for Glycosylated Hemoglobin lab test is medically necessary. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule, ACOEM and Official Disability Guidelines do not address this request. Labtestsonline.org was referenced. This test is used to monitor a person's diabetes and to aid in treatment decisions, to diagnosis diabetes, to help identify those at an increased risk of developing diabetes. The A1c test evaluates the average amount of glucose in the blood over the last 2 to 3 months. It does this by measuring the concentration of glycated (also often called glycosylated) hemoglobin A1c. The injured worker does have type 2 diabetes. Therefore, this request is medically necessary.

Urine Culture: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Labtestsonline.org:
<http://labtestsonline.org/understanding/analytes/urine-culture/>

Decision rationale: The request for Urine Culture is not medically necessary. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule, ACOEM and Official Disability Guidelines do not address this request. Labtestsonline.org was referenced. The urine culture test detects and identifies bacteria and yeast in the urine. Urine is produced by the kidneys, 2 fist sized organs located on either side of the spine at the base of the ribcage. The kidneys filter waste out of the blood and produce urine, a yellow fluid, to carry wastes out of the body. Urine travels through tubes called ureters from the kidneys to the bladder, where it is stored temporarily, and then through the urethra as it is voided. Urine is generally sterile, but sometimes bacteria or, more rarely, yeast can move from the skin outside the urethra and migrate back up the urinary tract to cause a urinary tract infection (UTI). It was not reported that the injured worker was having any type of urinary symptoms. The rationale was not reported to support this test. The clinical information submitted for review does not provide evidence to support the decision for a urine culture. Therefore, this request is not medically necessary.

Bacterial Culture, Aerobic Isolate: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Labtestsonline.org

Decision rationale: The request for Bacterial Culture, aerobic isolate is not medically necessary. This lab test cannot be found on labtestsonline.org due to no specific bodily fluids were reported. Therefore, this request is not medically necessary.