

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0116656		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	08/04/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	07/09/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/17/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	07/09/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	07/25/2014

### 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 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:

There were 70 pages provided for this review. The application for independent medical review was signed on July 25, 2014. The "medical services" or items that were denied or modified were physical therapy two times a week for six weeks to the lumbar and thoracic spine. There was a review summary. There has been no improvement with the lumbar pain. The baseline level of pain was rated as eight out of 10 on average. There were illegible findings noted on mornings and night. The patient takes cyclobenzaprine, which was not working well on the pain. On exam, there was tenderness to palpation at the lumbar spine at L5-S1 levels and the paraspinal musculature in the bilateral sacroiliac joints. There was positive straight leg raise on the left. There were however no subjective and objective findings pertaining to the thoracic spine. The diagnosis was a lumbar spine sprain and strain without radiculopathy, lumbago, spinal disc protrusion and thoracic or lumbosacral neuritis were radiculitis. The request was for 12 sessions of therapy. The medicines were cyclobenzaprine and Vicodin. The patient had six approved therapy sessions, six approved acupuncture sessions and six approved chiropractic visits. The response was not documented in the records submitted.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Physio Therapy x 2 week x 6 weeks lumbar and thoracic spine:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Therapy Guidelines Page(s): 99.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 98.

**Decision rationale:** The MTUS does permit physical therapy in chronic situations, noting that one should allow for fading of treatment frequency (from up to 3 visits per week to 1 or less), plus active self-directed home Physical Medicine. The conditions mentioned are Myalgia and myositis, unspecified (ICD9 729.1): 9-10 visits over 8 weeks; Neuralgia, neuritis, and radiculitis, unspecified (ICD9 729.2) 8-10 visits over 4 weeks; and Reflex sympathetic dystrophy (CRPS) (ICD9 337.2): 24 visits over 16 weeks. This claimant does not have these conditions. And, after several documented sessions of therapy, it is not clear why the patient would not be independent with self-care at this point. Also, there are especially strong caveats in the MTUS/ACOEM guidelines against over treatment in the chronic situation supporting the clinical notion that the move to independence and an active, independent home program is clinically in the best interest of the patient. They cite: 1. Although mistreating or under treating pain is of concern, an even greater risk for the physician is over treating the chronic pain patient... Over treatment often results in irreparable harm to the patient's socioeconomic status, home life, personal relationships, and quality of life in general. 2. A patient's complaints of pain should be acknowledged. Patient and clinician should remain focused on the ultimate goal of rehabilitation leading to optimal functional recovery, decreased healthcare utilization, and maximal self actualization. The request is not medically necessary and appropriate.