

Case Number:	CM14-0129939		
Date Assigned:	08/20/2014	Date of Injury:	03/27/2013
Decision Date:	10/10/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/07/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/14/2014

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:

The applicant is a represented Tink, Inc., employee who has filed a claim for chronic low back pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of March 27, 2013. Thus far, the applicant has been treated with the following: Analgesic medications; attorney representation; unspecified amounts of physical therapy; earlier knee arthroscopy; and opioid therapy. In a utilization review report dated August 7, 2014, the claims administrator denied a request for 8 sessions of physical therapy. The claims administrator stated that the applicant had had unspecified amounts of physical therapy through that point in time and had failed to improve with the same. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. The applicant had apparently undergone a knee arthroscopic major synovectomy procedure on July 24, 2014, to ameliorate a diagnosis of left knee medial plica syndrome, adhesions, and chondromalacia. The applicant had completed 7 sessions of postoperative physical therapy for the knee on July 24, 2014, it was suggested. Additional physical therapy for the lumbar spine was reportedly sought on that date. The applicant's work status was not furnished at that point. In a medical-legal evaluation dated February 10, 2014, it was stated that the applicant's case and care had been complicated by a variety of issues, including diabetes, and knee arthritis. The applicant stated that he had succeeded in losing 40 pounds of weight. An April 25, 2014, lumbar MRI was notable for a large 7-mm posterior disc protrusion at L5-S1 causing mild-to-moderate central canal stenosis and moderate-to-severe right-sided neural foraminal compromise.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Lumbar Physical Therapy 2x/week qty# 8: Overturned

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 99.

Decision rationale: The 8-session course treatment proposed is seemingly consistent with the 8- to 10-session course recommended on page 99 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines for radiculitis, the diagnosis reportedly present here. The documentation on file, while at times incomplete, does seemingly suggest that the applicant experienced a flare in low back pain on or around the date of the request, July 24, 2014. The applicant had a variety of comorbidities, which were impeding and delaying his recovery, including knee arthritis, obesity, and diabetes. Additional Physical Therapy for The Lumbar Spine in the amount, frequency, and overall quantity proposed was/is therefore indicated. Accordingly, the request is medically necessary.