

Case Number:	CM14-0142683		
Date Assigned:	09/10/2014	Date of Injury:	07/24/2007
Decision Date:	10/16/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/26/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/03/2014

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 is licensed to practice in Nevada. 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 records presented for review indicate that this 45-year-old female was reportedly injured on July 24, 2007. The most recent progress note, dated August 13, 2014, indicated that there were ongoing complaints of back pain radiating to the lower extremities. The injured employee was requesting reprogramming of the pulse generator as it was not providing relief for the lower extremities. The physical examination demonstrated decreased lumbar spine range of motion with pain. There was decreased sensation at the bottom and side of the first toe. Diagnostic imaging studies were not reviewed during this visit. Previous treatment included lumbar spine surgery to include a laminectomy and fusion at L5-S1 and the placement of a spinal cord stimulator and subsequent revision. A request had been made for a pulse generator and a pulse generator replacement and was not certified in the pre-authorization process on August 26, 2014.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Pulse Generator: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Spinal Cord Stimulators (SCS) Page(s): 107.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG): Pain, spinal cord stimulators, updated October 6, 2014.

Decision rationale: According to the Official Disability Guidelines, as batteries for both rechargeable and non-rechargeable spinal cord stimulator systems are nearing end of life, there are both early replacement indicators and end of service notifications. Typical life may be 8-9 years for rechargeable batteries, but this depends on the unit. In addition, the physician programmer can be used to interrogate the implanted device and determine the estimated remaining battery life. A review of the medical records indicates that the injured employee had a spinal cord stimulator implant on January 17, 2013. As such, it is extremely unlikely that a new battery would be needed a year and a half later. Considering this, this request for a pulse generator is not medically necessary.

Pulse Generator Replacement: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Spinal cord stimulators (SCS) Page(s): 107.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG): Pain, spinal cord stimulators, updated October 6, 2014.

Decision rationale: According to the Official Disability Guidelines, as batteries for both rechargeable and non-rechargeable spinal cord stimulator systems are nearing end of life, there are both early replacement indicators and end of service notifications. Typical life may be 8-9 years for rechargeable batteries, but this depends on the unit. In addition, the physician programmer can be used to interrogate the implanted device and determine the estimated remaining battery life. A review of the medical records indicates that the injured employee had a spinal cord stimulator implant on January 17, 2013. As such, it is extremely unlikely that a new battery would be needed a year and a half later. Considering this, this request for a pulse generator replacement is not medically necessary.