MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM14-0143660		
Date Assigned:	09/12/2014	Date of Injury:	03/13/2010
Decision Date:	10/10/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/13/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/04/2014

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 Family 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:

This is a 39-year-old male patient who reported an industrial injury on 3/13/2010, over four and a half years ago, attributed to the performance of his usual and customary job tasks. The patient has been complaining of lower back pain radiating to the lower extremities. The patient was recommended to have a lumbar spine discogram at L3-L4 and L2-L3 in order to rule out a need for surgical intervention at L3-L4 or L4-L5, which was noncertified, is medically not necessary. The patient was also ordered a preoperative medical clearance.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Pre-op medical clearance: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Immediate Preoperative Visits and Other Services By Physician

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low Back Chapter for Preoperative Lab Testing

Decision rationale: The patient was ordered a preoperative medical clearance in anticipation of a lumbar spine discogram; however, since the lumbar spine discogram is inconsistent with the

recommendations of evidence-based guidelines to it was not certified. There is no demonstrated medical necessity for a preoperative clearance if the operative procedure is canceled. A preoperative clearance and evaluation includes a laboratory workup has specific laboratory values to be requested to evaluate for patient stability prior to a surgical intervention. There was no rationale supported by objective evidence to support the medical necessity of the requested preoperative clearance. The requested surgical intervention was not certified, therefore, there is no medical necessity for the requested preoperative clearance. Evidence-based guidelines recommend a preoperative evaluation to determine if it is safe to proceed with surgery and anesthesia in the absence of comorbidities necessitating examination from a specialist, the preoperative clearance is a component of the surgical procedure and is performed prior to the surgical intervention. The requested surgical intervention or procedure was assessed as not medically necessary. Since the requested procedure was not medically necessary and there is no medical necessity for the requested preoperative clearance evaluation or testing. Preoperative laboratory testing is generally medically necessary for patients of certain age groups with documented underlying medical issues or prolonged use of medications to establish patient stability prior to surgical intervention. Since there was no specificity applied to the request, there is no demonstrated medical necessity. Since the requested procedure was assessed as not medically necessary, the request for preoperative clearance is also not medically necessary.