

Case Number:	CM14-0147266		
Date Assigned:	09/18/2014	Date of Injury:	11/07/1997
Decision Date:	10/16/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/27/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/10/2014

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 Anesthesiology, has a subspecialty in Pain Management 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 57-year-old female with a 11/7/97 date of injury, and L4-S1 anterior and posterior lumbar fusion in 2001. At the time (7/17/14) of request for authorization for Outpatient Left Lumbar Nerve Root Block at L4-5 under fluoro and anesthesia, there is documentation of subjective (increased lumbar pain and associated pain in L5 and S1 distributions) and objective (tenderness over the bilateral lumbar facets, positive bilateral straight leg raising test, pain on lateral bending, and bilateral thoracolumbar spasms were noted) findings, current diagnoses (lumbosacral neuritis Nos, lumbar/lumbosacral disc degeneration, and postlaminectomy syndrome), and treatment to date (medications and previous epidural steroid injection (2013)). Medical report identifies that previous epidural steroid injection provided 90% pain relief for one year. There is no documentation of decreased need for pain medications and functional response following previous injection.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Outpatient Left Lumbar Nerve Root Block at L4-5 under fluoro and anesthesia: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural Steroid Injections Page(s): 46.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low Back, Epidural Steroid Injections (ESIs)

Decision rationale: MTUS reference to ACOEM guidelines identifies documentations of objective radiculopathy in an effort to avoid surgery as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of epidural steroid injections. ODG identifies documentation of at least 50-70% pain relief for six to eight weeks, with a general recommendation of no more than 4 blocks per region per year, as well as decreased need for pain medications, and functional response as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of additional epidural steroid injections. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of lumbosacral neuritis Nos, lumbar/lumbosacral disc degeneration, and postlaminectomy syndrome. In addition, there is documentation of previous lumbar epidural steroid injection (2013). However despite documentation that previous epidural steroid injection provided 90% pain relief for one year, there is no documentation of decreased need for pain medications and functional response following previous injection. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Outpatient Left Lumbar Nerve Root Block at L4-5 under fluoro and anesthesia is not medically necessary.