

Case Number:	CM14-0147459		
Date Assigned:	09/15/2014	Date of Injury:	10/02/2012
Decision Date:	10/15/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/21/2014
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 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:

This 29-year-old patient had a date of injury on 10/2/2012. The mechanism of injury was picking up a box of soap from a pallet. In a progress noted dated 4/29/2014, the patient complained that the right side of her back was more painful than the left. The patient also complained of low back pain and denied any radicular symptoms. The pain averages 9/10 on VAS. Exam findings included the patient was alert and oriented, normal strength and an antalgic gait. She is using a TENS unit for her pain and reports this does help decrease her symptoms. The diagnostic impression shows lumbosacral spondylosis. Treatment to date: medication therapy, behavioral modification, TENS unit. A UR decision dated 8/21/2014 denied the request for Retro TENS unit 6 month rental with supplies, stating that there was no documentation this request would be used as an adjunct therapy or rationale provided as to why a 6 month trial is medically necessary.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Retro TENS Unit , 6 month rental, supplies: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines TENS, chronic pain (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 114-116.

Decision rationale: CA MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that TENS units are not recommended as a primary treatment modality, but a one-month home-based TENS trial may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option. Criteria for the use of TENS unit include Chronic intractable pain, pain of at least three months duration, evidence that other appropriate pain modalities have been tried (including medication) and failed, and a treatment plan including the specific short- and long-term goals of treatment with the TENS unit. CA MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that a one-month trial period of the TENS unit should be documented (as an adjunct to ongoing treatment modalities within a functional restoration approach) with documentation of how often the unit was used, as well as outcomes in terms of pain relief and function and that other ongoing pain treatment should also be documented during the trial period including medication. In a progress report dated 4/29/2014, the patient claimed that the TENS unit has been helpful in decreasing her symptoms. However, in the reports viewed, it was unclear when this treatment was initiated, and there was no discussion regarding using this item as an adjunct to ongoing treatment modalities within a functional restoration approach. Furthermore, no clear rationale was provided regarding the medical necessity of using the TENS unit beyond a 1 month trial. Therefore, the request for Retro TENS unit for 6 months with supplies was not medically necessary.