

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0161967		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	10/07/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	12/04/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/31/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	09/26/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	10/02/2014

### 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 52-year-old male with a 12/4/12 date of injury. At the time (7/25/14) of request for authorization for Bilateral L4-L5, L5-S1 transforaminal block, there is documentation of subjective (low back pain radiating down to bilateral lower extremities) and objective (tenderness over the L4-S1 spinal vertebral area, decreased lumbar range of motion with pain, decreased motor strength in the bilateral lower extremities, and positive bilateral seated straight leg raising test) findings, current diagnoses (lumbar disc degeneration, chronic pain, and lumbar radiculopathy), and treatment to date (medications and previous epidural steroid injection (10/1/13)). Medical reports identify that the previous epidural steroid injection provided some pain improvement for three weeks. There is no documentation of at least 50-70% pain relief for six to eight weeks, as well as 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:

**Bilateral L4-L5, L5-S1 transforaminal block:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural Steroid Injections (ESIs).

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 300. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation 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 lumbar disc degeneration, chronic pain, and lumbar radiculopathy. In addition, there is documentation of previous lumbar epidural steroid injection (10/1/13). However despite documentation that previous epidural steroid injection provided some pain improvement for three weeks, there is no documentation of at least 50-70% pain relief for six to eight weeks, as well as decreased need for pain medications, and functional response following previous injection. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Bilateral L4-L5, L5-S1 Transforaminal Block is not medically necessary.