

Case Number:	CM14-0163919		
Date Assigned:	10/08/2014	Date of Injury:	01/22/2014
Decision Date:	11/04/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/18/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/06/2014

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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 37-year-old male with a 1/22/14 date of injury. At the time (9/18/14) of request for authorization for Tens unit purchase, there is documentation of subjective (low back pain radiating to the bilateral lower extremities, worse on the left side) and objective (spasms in the lumbar paraspinal muscles, and stiffness in the lumbar spine, 4+/5 muscle strength in the extensor hallucis longus, positive straight leg raise) findings, current diagnoses (lumbar radiculopathy, low back pain, and myofascial pain), and treatment to date (epidural steroid injection, activity modification, physical therapy, TENS, and medications). 8/6/14 medical report identifies that the TENS helps with muscle spasms and back pain. There is no documentation of how often the unit was used, outcomes in terms of pain relief and function, and other ongoing pain treatment during the trial period (including medication use).

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tens unit purchase: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) Page(s): 113-117.

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation of pain of at least three months duration, evidence that other appropriate pain modalities have been tried (including medication) and failed, a statement identifying that the TENS unit will be used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration, and a treatment plan including the specific short- and long-term goals of treatment with the TENS, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of a month trial of a TENS unit. In addition, MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation of how often the unit was used, outcomes in terms of pain relief and function, and other ongoing pain treatment during the trial period (including medication use), as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of continued TENS unit. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of lumbar radiculopathy, low back pain, and myofascial pain. However, despite documentation that TENS helps with muscle spasms and back pain, there is no documentation of how often the unit was used, outcomes in terms of pain relief and function, and other ongoing pain treatment during the trial period (including medication use). Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Tens unit purchase is not medically necessary