

Case Number:	CM14-0168258		
Date Assigned:	10/15/2014	Date of Injury:	02/27/2012
Decision Date:	11/18/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/22/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/13/2014

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 Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, has a subspecialty in Interventional Spine, 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:

The patient is a 50 years old female with an injury date on 02/27/2012. Based on the 09/08/2014 progress report provided by [REDACTED], the diagnoses are: 1. Lumbar radiculopathy status post lumbar microdiscectomy 2008/2009. 2. Status post lumbar fusion 01/24/2013 with a single left pedicle screw and cage at L4-L5. In regard to the cage and left pedicle screw, it appears there is a probable pseudoarthrosis. 3. Facet mediated low back pain. According to this report, the patient complains of persistent low back pain with "radiation of numbness, tingling and pain down the right leg mostly to the thigh and to the foot by the end of the day." The patient occasionally has numbness and tingling down the left leg and foot. The patient has difficulty with daily activities such as completing daily house chores. Physical exam reveals "no tenderness noted today." Sensation was diminished in the right L4, L5, and S1 dermatomes. Right straight leg raise and slump test elicited lower extremity symptoms bilaterally. There were no other significant findings noted on this report. The utilization review denied the request on 09/22/2014. [REDACTED] is the requesting provider, and he provided treatment reports from 06/05/2014 to 09/08/2014.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

1 Medial Branch Block at the Right L4-L5 and L5-S1 Levels: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines 18th Edition Facet Joint Pain Signs & Symptoms

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 under Facet joint diagnostic blocks (injections) and Facet joint medial branch blocks (therapeutic injections)

Decision rationale: According to the 09/08/2014 report by [REDACTED] this patient presents with persistent low back pain with "radiation of numbness, tingling and pain down the right leg mostly to the thigh and to the foot by the end of the day."The treater is requesting decision for 1 medial branch block at the right L4-L5 and L5-S1 level. Regarding medial branch blocks, MTUS does not address it, but ODG low back chapter recommends it for "low-back pain that is non-radicular and at no more than two levels bilaterally." Reviews of the reports do not show any evidence of prior MBB being done in the past. The patient has radiating low back pain that travel to the bilateral lower extremities. In addition, physical exam does not indicate the patient has paravertebral facet tenderness. Therefore, the requested MBB is not in accordance with the ODG Guidelines at this time. The request is not medically necessary.