

Case Number:	CM14-0098641		
Date Assigned:	09/16/2014	Date of Injury:	06/20/2005
Decision Date:	10/07/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/27/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/26/2014

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 Orthopedic Surgery 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 injured his neck right shoulder and upper extremities. He's undergone for cervical surgeries. CT myelogram from 2014 reveals pseudoarthrosis at C6-7. Patient continues to have chronic neck pain. Revision cervical spine surgery and redo fusion with instrumentation is medically necessary and has been authorized. Also at issue is whether preoperative evaluation is medically necessary. Also at issue is whether preoperative ENT evaluation is medically necessary.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Pre-operative ENT Evaluation: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation neck pain chapter, ODG neck pain chapter

Decision rationale: Preoperative ENT evaluation is appropriate for this patient. The patient has had multiple anterior cervical surgeries and now has been authorized for revision surgery. There is increased risk of recurrent laryngeal nerve with revision surgery. Guidelines established in the text book for spinal surgery by Bridwell KH, Lippincott publishing 2012 clearly indicate that ENT evaluation is appropriate and should be performed.

Pre-operative Medical clearance with internal medicine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation AHRQ 2014

Decision rationale: Guidelines do not support the use of preoperative medical clearance for this patient undergoing cervical spine revision surgery. The medical records indicate that the patient has diabetes but no other significant risk factors. Diabetes in itself is not a significant risk factor for cervical spine surgery that requires preoperative medical clearance. Guidelines do not support preoperative medical clearance for patients with minimal medical comorbidities.

Two day inpatient stay: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines Neck and Upper Back Chapter

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation MTUS neck pain chapter, ODG neck pain chapter

Decision rationale: 2 day hospital stay is very reasonable after complex revision anterior cervical spine surgery. The surgery has increased complications increased risk. The patient has had multiple previous cervical spine surgeries. Guidelines to indicate that 48 hours of hospital stay is appropriate after complex revision anterior cervical surgery.