

Case Number:	CM14-0213505		
Date Assigned:	12/31/2014	Date of Injury:	01/08/2014
Decision Date:	02/27/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/21/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/19/2014

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. 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/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:

State(s) of Licensure: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabn, Pain Management

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 worker is a 57-year-old female with an original date of injury of January 8, 2014. The industrial diagnoses include chronic pain syndrome, depression, cervical radiculopathy, lumbar radiculopathy, carpal tunnel syndrome, chronic neck pain, and chronic low back pain. The disputed request is a functional capacity evaluation. It is noted that the patient is also seeking a rheumatology consultation. A utilization review determined nation had not survived the request for functional capacity evaluation. The stated rationale for this denial included the fact that it is not established whether the worker has a job to return to, it is unclear whether the worker had unsuccessful return to work attacks, and it is not clear whether her present injuries require detailed exploration of a worker's abilities.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Fitness for Duty Chapter; Guidelines for performing an FCE

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 1 Prevention Page(s): 12. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM), 2nd Edition, (2004) Chapter 1 Pages 12 & Chapter 7, Pages 137-138, Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Fitness for Duty Chapter, Functional Capacity Evaluation.

Decision rationale: The CA MTUS does not specifically address functional capacity evaluations. Other well-established guidelines include ACOEM and ODG. ACOEM Chapter 7 Functional Capacity Evaluation states on pages 137-138: "The employer or claim administrator may request functional ability evaluations, also known as Functional Capacity Evaluations, to further assess current work capability. These assessments also may be ordered by the treating or evaluating physician, if the physician feels the information from such testing is crucial. Though Functional Capacity Evaluations (FCEs) are widely used and promoted, it is important for physicians and others to understand the limitations and pitfalls of these evaluations." The Official Disability Guidelines specify the following "Guidelines for performing an FCE: If a worker is actively participating in determining the suitability of a particular job, the FCE is more likely to be successful. A FCE is not as effective when the referral is less collaborative and more directive. It is important to provide as much detail as possible about the potential job to the assessor. Job specific FCEs are more helpful than general assessments. The report should be accessible to all the return to work participants. Consider an FCE if 1. Case management is hampered by complex issues such as: Prior unsuccessful RTW attempts, Conflicting medical reporting on precautions and/or fitness for modified job, Injuries that require detailed exploration of a worker's abilities. 2. Timing is appropriate: Close or at MMI/all key medical reports secured, Additional/secondary conditions clarified. Do not proceed with an FCE if, the sole purpose is to determine a worker's effort or compliance, the worker has returned to work and an ergonomic assessment has not been arranged. (WSIB, 2003)"In the case of this injured worker, there is documentation that the requesting provider feels a functional capacity evaluation is important to "systematically document her current physical abilities" according to a 9/11/2014 progress note. According to the Official Disability Guidelines, the patients who are appropriate for FCE should be near MMI and have had issues such as unsuccessful return to work attempts. In this case, the patient is not near MMI as diagnostic work-up with a rheumatology consultation is still being sought. There is no descriptor of her job to return to. Therefore, the request for FCE is not medically necessary.