

Case Number:	CM14-0081531		
Date Assigned:	07/18/2014	Date of Injury:	03/28/2012
Decision Date:	05/27/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/23/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/02/2014

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. 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: Iowa, Illinois, Hawaii

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine, Public Health & General Preventive Medicine

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 injured worker is a 45 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 03/28/2012. The initial complaints or symptoms included sudden low back pain and right posterior thigh pain. The initial diagnoses were not mentioned in the clinical notes. Treatment to date has included conservative care, medications, x-rays, MRIs, electro diagnostic testing, and conservative therapies. Currently, the injured worker complains of low back pain radiating into both lower extremities. The diagnoses include sciatica, obesity and degenerative disc disease. The request for authorization consisted of weight loss program.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Weight Loss Program w/ [REDACTED]: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Medical Disability Advisor, 5 Modalities: Diet Modification, Exercise, Behavior Modification, Drug Therapy and Surgery.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation UptoDate.com, Obesity in adults: Overview of management.

Decision rationale: MTUS is silent specifically regarding medical weight loss programs. Uptodate states: Overweight is defined as a BMI of 25 to 29.9 kg/m²; obesity is defined as a BMI of 30 kg/m². Severe obesity is defined as a BMI 40 kg/m² (or 35 kg/m² in the presence of comorbidities) Additionally, assessment of an individual's overall risk status includes determining the degree of overweight (body mass index [BMI]), the presence of abdominal obesity (waist circumference), and the presence of cardiovascular risk factors (e.g., hypertension, diabetes, dyslipidemia) or comorbidities (e.g., sleep apnea, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease). The relationship between BMI and risk allows identification of patients to target for weight loss intervention (algorithm 1). There are few data to support specific targets, and the approach described below is based upon clinical experience. All patients who would benefit from weight loss should receive counseling on diet, exercise, and goals for weight loss. For individuals with a BMI 30 kg/m² or a BMI of 27 to 29.9 kg/m² with comorbidities, who have failed to achieve weight loss goals through diet and exercise alone, we suggest pharmacologic therapy be added to lifestyle intervention. For patients with BMI 40 kg/m² who have failed diet, exercise, and drug therapy, we suggest bariatric surgery. Individuals with BMI >35 kg/m² with obesity-related comorbidities (hypertension, impaired glucose tolerance, diabetes mellitus, dyslipidemia, sleep apnea) who have failed diet, exercise, and drug therapy are also potential surgical candidates, assuming that the anticipated benefits outweigh the costs, risks, and side effects of the procedure. The treating physician does not outline any conservative approaches to weight loss such as diet, counseling and exercise. Medical records do not indicate that any lifestyle interventions have been tried and failed. As such, the request for a Weight Loss Program w/ [REDACTED] is not medically necessary.