

Case Number:	CM15-0101166		
Date Assigned:	06/04/2015	Date of Injury:	04/14/2012
Decision Date:	07/02/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/20/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/26/2015

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 & Rehabilitation, 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 injured worker is a 58 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on April 14, 2012. She reported pain in the low back as she was lifting a box. Treatment to date has included modified work duties, physical therapy, medications, MRI of the low back, orthotics, bone stimulator, and lumbar spine surgery. Currently, the injured worker complains of low back pain with radiation of pain into the bilateral buttocks. She reports that her condition has remained unchanged. She rates her pain a 3-4 on a 10 point scale for the previous several months. She uses Ibuprofen for pain and reports good benefit. She uses a cane when walking long distances. She goes to an exercise class for her low back. Her activities of daily living are limited in that she is not able to do deep cleaning. She is able to make her bed and take care of her personal needs. The diagnoses associated with the request include status post L4-L5 posterolateral arthrodesis, rheumatoid arthritis, and grade 1 spondylolisthesis of L4-L5. The treatment plan includes physical therapy and work restrictions. A therapy report dated December 31, 2014 indicates that the patient completed on 11 out of 11 authorized visits.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical Therapy 3 x 4 weeks for the Lumbar Spine: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 298, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 98 of 127. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Low Back Chapter, Physical Therapy.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for additional physical therapy, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines recommend a short course of active therapy with continuation of active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement levels. ODG has more specific criteria for the ongoing use of physical therapy. ODG recommends a trial of physical therapy. If the trial of physical therapy results in objective functional improvement, as well as ongoing objective treatment goals, then additional therapy may be considered. Within the documentation available for review, there is documentation of completion of prior PT sessions, but there is no documentation of specific objective functional improvement with the previous sessions and remaining deficits that cannot be addressed within the context of an independent home exercise program, yet are expected to improve with formal supervised therapy. Furthermore, the request exceeds the amount of PT recommended by ODG for these patients diagnoses and, unfortunately, there is no provision for modification of the current request. In light of the above issues, the currently requested additional physical therapy is not medically necessary.