

Case Number:	CM15-0010170		
Date Assigned:	01/27/2015	Date of Injury:	06/19/2014
Decision Date:	03/17/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/23/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/16/2015

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

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 23 year old female with a work injury dated 06/19/2014. The mechanism of injury was described as pushing a patient to their room using her right hand when she began to experience a tingling sensation and pain in her right shoulder and low back. She also complained of midline low back pain. Physical exam revealed tenderness anterolateral subacromial and lateral deltoid of right shoulder. Impingement sign was positive. Gait was mildly antalgic. The injured worker had received partial relief with physical therapy. X-rays taken at the time of visit (11/21/2014) were: Lumbar Negative for fracture, dislocation, subluxation or joint space narrowing. Right shoulder coracoacromial arch and AC joints bilateral Negative for fracture, dislocation subluxation or joint space narrowing. Diagnosis was right postero trapezius pain. On 12/12/2014 utilization review issued the following decisions: The request for physical therapy times 12 was modified to approve physical therapy times 4. ODG was cited. The request for MRI of the cervical and lumbar spine was non-certified. ACOEM was cited. The requested treatments entered reflect the approval of the request for MRI of right shoulder.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MRI Cervical Spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 177.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Disorders, Introductory Material, Special Studies and Diagnostic and Treatment Considerations, page(s) 171-171, 177-179.

Decision rationale: Per ACOEM Treatment Guidelines for the Neck and Upper Back Disorders, criteria for ordering imaging include Emergence of a red flag; Physiologic evidence of tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction; Failure to progress in a strengthening program intended to avoid surgery; Clarification of the anatomy prior to an invasive procedure. Physiologic evidence may be in the form of definitive neurologic findings on physical examination and electrodiagnostic studies. Unequivocal findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination are sufficient evidence to warrant imaging studies if symptoms persist; however, review of submitted medical reports, including reports from the provider, have not adequately demonstrated the indication for the MRI of the Cervical spine nor document any specific clinical findings to support this imaging study as the patient has unchanged neurological deficit in bilateral upper extremities. When the neurologic examination is less clear, further physiologic evidence of nerve dysfunction can be obtained before ordering an imaging study. The MRI Cervical Spine is not medically necessary and appropriate.

MRI Lumbar Spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 303.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): Chapter 12- Low Back Complaints, Imaging, pages 303-304.

Decision rationale: Per ACOEM Treatment Guidelines for the Lower Back Disorders, under Special Studies and Diagnostic and Treatment Considerations, states Criteria for ordering imaging studies, include Emergence of a red flag; Physiologic evidence of tissue insult or neurologic dysfunction; Failure to progress in a strengthening program intended to avoid surgery; Clarification of the anatomy prior to an invasive procedure. Physiologic evidence may be in the form of definitive neurologic findings on physical examination and electrodiagnostic studies. Unequivocal findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination are sufficient evidence to warrant imaging studies if symptoms persist; however, review of submitted medical reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication for MRI of the Lumbar spine nor document any specific clinical findings to support this imaging study as the patient is without specific dermatomal or myotomal neurological deficits. When the neurologic examination is less clear, further physiologic evidence of nerve dysfunction can be obtained before ordering an imaging study. The MRI Lumbar Spine is not medically necessary and appropriate.

12 sessions of Physical Therapy: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Therapy, pages 98-99.

Decision rationale: Physical therapy is considered medically necessary when the services require the judgment, knowledge, and skills of a qualified physical therapist due to the complexity and sophistication of the therapy and the physical condition of the patient. However, there is no clear measurable evidence of progress with the PT treatment already rendered including milestones of increased ROM, strength, and functional capacity. Review of submitted physician reports show no evidence of functional benefit, unchanged chronic symptom complaints, clinical findings, and functional status. There is no evidence documenting functional baseline with clear goals to be reached and the patient striving to reach those goals. The Chronic Pain Guidelines allow for 9-10 visits of physical therapy with fading of treatment to an independent self-directed home program. It appears the employee has received significant therapy sessions without demonstrated evidence of functional improvement to allow for additional therapy treatments. There is no report of acute flare-up, new injuries, or change in symptom or clinical findings to support for formal PT in a patient that has been instructed on a home exercise program for this chronic injury. Submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication to support further physical therapy when prior treatment rendered has not resulted in any functional benefit. The 12 sessions of Physical Therapy is not medically necessary and appropriate.