

Case Number:	CM15-0015273		
Date Assigned:	02/03/2015	Date of Injury:	10/27/2010
Decision Date:	03/20/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/20/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/27/2015

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 42 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 10/27/10. She has reported low back pain from falling down stairs. The diagnoses have included lumbar degenerative disc disease, ankle sprain and back contusion. Treatment to date has included physical therapy and oral medications. As of the PR2 dated 1/6/15, the injured worker reported 4/10 pain in the low back that radiates to the left thigh x 3 weeks. The treating physician requested a TENs unit for purchase. On 1/20/15 Utilization Review non-certified a request for a TENs unit for purchase. The utilization review physician cited the MTUS guidelines for chronic intractable pain. On 1/27/15, the injured worker submitted an application for IMR for review of a TENs unit for purchase.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) unit for purchase: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Transcutaneous electrotherapy, Criteria for the use of TENS Page(s).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Transcutaneous Electrotherapy, TENS for chronic pain, pages 114-117.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines, ongoing treatment is not advisable if there are no signs of objective progress and functional restoration has not been demonstrated. Specified criteria for the use of TENS Unit include trial in adjunction to ongoing treatment modalities within the functional restoration approach as appropriate for documented chronic intractable pain of at least three months duration with failed evidence of other appropriate pain modalities tried such as medication. From the submitted reports, the patient has received extensive conservative medical treatment to include chronic opiate analgesics and other medication, physical therapy, activity modifications/rest, yet the patient has remained symptomatic and functionally impaired. There is no documentation on how or what TENS unit is requested, functional improvement from trial treatment, nor is there any documented short-term or long-term goals of treatment with the TENS unit. There is no evidence for change in work status, increased in ADLs, decreased VAS score, medication usage, or treatment utilization from any TENS treatment already rendered for purchase. The TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) unit for purchase is not medically necessary and appropriate.