

Case Number:	CM15-0115493		
Date Assigned:	06/23/2015	Date of Injury:	07/19/2012
Decision Date:	07/22/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/06/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/16/2015

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: Massachusetts

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 27-year-old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 7/19/2012. Diagnoses include lumbosacral strain with radicular symptoms. Treatment to date has included physical therapy, medications, work modifications, activity restriction and ergonomic evaluation. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the lumbar spine dated 8/08/2014 showed early degenerative changes. Per the Primary Treating Physician's Progress Report dated 5/25/2015, the injured worker reported lower back pain with pain down the back of the right leg to bottom of the heel. She also reports pain in both hips when standing from sitting. She reports continued physical therapy. NSAIDs do not affect the pain. Physical examination of the lumbar spine revealed tenderness in the paravertebral musculature and central spine. The right sacroiliac joint was also very tender to palpation with radiation of pain down the posterior aspect of the right leg to the bottom of the heel. There was flexion of the fingertips to knees and decreased range of motion of the back with extension of 5 degrees, lateral flexion 20 degrees bilaterally, right lateral rotation 20 degrees and left lateral rotation 30 degrees. The plan of care included, and authorization was requested on 5/27/2015 for a TENS unit and one physical therapy session to instruct on the use of a TENS unit and 12 sessions aquatic therapy.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

1 Physical therapy session to instruct on the use of the TENS unit: Overturned

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines (1) Neuromuscular electrical stimulation (NMES devices), p121 (2) Transcutaneous electrotherapy, p114.

Decision rationale: The claimant sustained a work injury in July 2012 and continues to be treated for radiating back pain. When seen, she was having pain radiating into the right lower extremity with numbness, tingling, and spasms. She had previously tried TENS but had an aggravation of symptoms after an excessively high stimulation level. Physical examination findings included lumbar spine tenderness with decreased range of motion. Straight leg raising was positive. There was right sacroiliac joint tenderness. Authorization for a 30-day home trial of TENS and a single physical therapy session for instruction in its use was requested. In terms of TENS, a one-month home-based trial may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option. In this case, the claimant had difficulty using TENS previously. One session of physical therapy for instruction in the use of a home unit during a trial of use is medically necessary and appropriate.