

Case Number:	CM15-0115497		
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: 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 27 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on July 19, 2012, incurring low back injuries. Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the lumbar spine revealed disc bulging and degenerative changes. She was diagnosed with lumbar degenerative disc disease and sciatic neuropathy. Treatment included physical therapy, aquatic therapy, TENS transcutaneous electrical stimulation unit, anti-inflammatory drugs, pain medications, and analgesic topical patches and work restrictions and modifications. Currently, the injured worker complained of persistent in the lower back radiculopathy down the right leg to the heel with spasms and tingling and numbness in the foot and toes. The treatment plan that was requested for authorization included thirty day trial for a transcutaneous electrical stimulation unit for the lumbar spine.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TENS Unit 30 Day Trial for the Lumbar Spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines TENS Page(s): 114.

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 analgesics and other medication, extensive physical therapy, activity modifications, and TENS use yet the patient has remained symptomatic and functionally impaired. There is no documentation on how or what TENS unit is requested, nor is there any documented short-term or long-term goals of treatment with the TENS unit. There is no evidence for change in functional status, increased in ADLs, decreased VAS score, medication usage, or treatment utilization from the treatment already rendered. The TENS Unit 30 Day Trial for the Lumbar Spine is not medically necessary and appropriate.