

Case Number:	CM15-0118755		
Date Assigned:	06/29/2015	Date of Injury:	03/12/1987
Decision Date:	07/28/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/05/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/19/2015

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 61-year-old male, who sustained an industrial/work injury on 3/12/87. He reported initial complaints of low back pain. The injured worker was diagnosed as having chronic low back pain and radiculopathy. Treatment to date has included medication and therapy. Currently, the injured worker complains of low back pain rated 5-6/10 that radiated down the bilateral lower extremities with limits in performing activities of daily living (ADL's). Per the primary physician's progress report (PR-2) on 5/26/15, examination revealed active range of motion on flexion at 30 degrees, extension at 10 degrees, bilateral lateral flexion at 15 degrees, positive straight leg raise, tenderness to palpation over the L4-5 spinous process, antalgic gait and used a single point cane. The requested treatments include 12 sessions of Physiotherapy for the Lumbar Spine.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

12 sessions of Physiotherapy for the Lumbar Spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Low Back - Lumbar & Thoracic (Acute & Chronic), Physical Therapy (PT).

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 x 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, it is unclear how many therapy sessions have been provided, making it impossible to determine if the patient has exceeded the maximum number recommended by guidelines for their diagnosis. In light of the above issues, the currently requested additional physical therapy is not medically necessary.