

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0121656		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	07/02/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	05/18/2014
<b>Decision Date:</b>	07/31/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	06/05/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	06/23/2015

### 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 male, who sustained an industrial injury on 5/18/2014. The mechanism of injury was moving heavy crates. The injured worker was diagnosed as having low back pain. Lumbar magnetic resonance imaging showed multilevel disc bulging and lumbosacral disc herniation. Treatment to date has included acupuncture, therapy and medication management. In a progress note dated 5/12/2015, the injured worker complains of low back pain, rated 8-10/10 radiating to the bilateral lower extremities. Physical examination showed lumbar tenderness with limited and painful range of motion. The treating physician is requesting lumbar 5-sacral 1 epidural steroid injection.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

#### **Lumbar epidural steroid injection at L5-S1: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural steroid injections.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural Steroid injections, page 46.

**Decision rationale:** MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines recommend ESI as an option for treatment of radicular pain (defined as pain in dermatomal distribution with corroborative findings of radiculopathy); However, radiculopathy must be documented on physical examination and corroborated by imaging studies and/or Electrodiagnostic testing, not provided here. Submitted reports have not demonstrated any specific neurological deficits in motor strength or reflexes or remarkable diagnostics to support the epidural injections. There is no report of acute new injury, flare-up, progressive neurological deficit, or red-flag conditions to support for pain procedure. There is also no documented failed conservative trial of physical therapy, medications, activity modification, or other treatment modalities to support for the epidural injection. Lumbar epidural injections may be an option for delaying surgical intervention; however, there is not surgery planned or identified pathological lesion noted. Criteria for the epidurals have not been met or established. The Lumbar epidural steroid injection at L5-S1 is not medically necessary and appropriate.