

Case Number:	CM15-0122931		
Date Assigned:	07/07/2015	Date of Injury:	09/01/1994
Decision Date:	07/31/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/17/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/25/2015

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 52-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 9/1/94. The injured worker was diagnosed as having sprain of the lumbar region and lumbar post-laminectomy syndrome. Treatment to date has included laminectomy and fusion at L4-S1 in 1995-1996, a home exercise program, and medication. Physical examination findings on 6/1/15 included tenderness and decreased range of motion of the lumbar spine with spasm. Decreased sensation was noted in the left leg. Currently, the injured worker complains of low back pain rated as 6/10 with left leg pain and numbness. The treating physician requested authorization for a lumbar epidural steroid injection at L3-4 with fluoroscopic guidance.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Lumbar ESI (epidural steroid injection) at L3-L4 with fluoroscopic guidance: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Epidural Steroid Injections (ESIs).

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 without correlating levels of deficit. 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 for this chronic injury of 1994. 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 ESI (epidural steroid injection) at L3-L4 with fluoroscopic guidance is not medically necessary and appropriate.