

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0028341		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	02/20/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	11/14/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	04/03/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	01/15/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	02/17/2015

### 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: Iowa, Illinois, Hawaii

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine, Public Health & General Preventive Medicine

### 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 46 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on November 14, 2012. He has reported falling at work feeling an immediate pain in the groin area and both hips. The diagnoses have included left L4-L5 3mm disc herniation with left sided radiculopathy, and bilateral hip avascular necrosis. Treatment to date has included physical therapy and medications. Currently, the injured worker complains of persistent low back pain and bilateral hip pain. The Primary Treating Physician's report dated December 18, 2014, noted the injured worker walked with a significant limp. Physical examination was noted to show tenderness, guarding, and spasm of the lumbar spine, with limited range of motion (ROM), and positive straight leg raise on the left. Sensation was noted to be diminished in the left sided L4, L5, and S1 dermatomes. On January 15, 2015, Utilization Review non-certified a MRI of the lumbar spine, noting that the documentation did not include any objective clinical status change or rationale for a repeat MRI study. The MTUS American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) Guidelines was cited. On February 17, 2015, the injured worker submitted an application for IMR for review of a MRI of the lumbar spine.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**MRI of the Lumbar Spine:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 287-315. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low Back - Lumbar & Thoracic (Acute & Chronic), MRIs (magnetic resonance imaging).

**Decision rationale:** MTUS and ACOEM recommend MRI, in general, for low back pain when "cauda equine, tumor, infection, or fracture are strongly suspected and plain film radiographs are negative, MRI test of choice for patients with prior back surgery." ACOEM additionally recommends against MRI for low back pain "before 1 month in absence of red flags." ODG states, "Imaging is indicated only if they have severe progressive neurologic impairments or signs or symptoms indicating a serious or specific underlying condition, or if they are candidates for invasive interventions. Immediate imaging is recommended for patients with major risk factors for cancer, spinal infection, cauda equina syndrome, or severe or progressive neurologic deficits. Imaging after a trial of treatment is recommended for patients who have minor risk factors for cancer, inflammatory back disease, vertebral compression fracture, radiculopathy, or symptomatic spinal stenosis. Subsequent imaging should be based on new symptoms or changes in current symptoms." The medical notes provided did not document (physical exam, objective testing, or subjective complaints) any red flags, significant worsening in symptoms or other findings suggestive of the pathologies outlined in the above guidelines. As such, the request for MRI Lumbar Spine is not medically necessary.