

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0037970		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	03/06/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	09/24/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	04/15/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	01/30/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	02/27/2015

### 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: Texas, New York, California  
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational 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 applicant is a represented 48-year-old [REDACTED] beneficiary who has filed a claim for chronic pain syndrome reportedly associated with an industrial injury of September 24, 2012. In a Utilization Review Report dated January 30, 2015, the claims administrator failed to approve a one-month trial of a TENS unit. The claims administrator referenced a January 23, 2015 progress note and an associated RFA form. The claims administrator contends that the applicant did not have evidence of neuropathic pain for which TENS unit trial could have been considered. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On January 23, 2015, the applicant reported ongoing complaints of neck pain, burning and radiating to the right upper extremity, 8/10. The applicant was given prescriptions of Norco and Prilosec. The applicant was also appeared to be using Mobic and Flexeril. The applicant did not appear to be working a 15-20-pound lifting limitation in place. 8/10 pain complaints were noted. The applicant was getting worse. A TENS unit trial was apparently endorsed.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**TENS (transcutaneous electrical neurostimulation) unit trial, 1 month:** Overturned

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Electrical stimulators (E-stim) Page(s): 45.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Criteria for the use of TENS; Pain Mechanisms Page(s): 116; 3.

**Decision rationale:** Yes, the proposed one-month TENS unit trial was medically necessary, medically appropriate, and indicated here. As noted on page 116 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, a TENS unit can be employed on a one-month trial basis in applicant's with chronic intractable pain of greater than three months duration in individuals in whom other appropriate pain modalities, including pain medications, have been tried and/or failed. Here, the applicant has apparently tried and failed a variety of pain medications, including Norco, Flexeril, Mobic, etc. The applicant does not appear to be working with previously imposed limitations. The applicant reported pain complaints as high as 8/10 on the January 23, 2015 office visit at issue. Moving forward with a one-month trial of the TENS unit was, thus, indicated. It is further noted that the applicant complaints of neck pain radiating to right arm are suggestive of an active neuropathic or radicular pain process, per page 3 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines. Page 3 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines goes onto note that all many chronic pain states can have some neuropathic component. Moving forward with a trial of a TENS unit was, thus, indicated, given the applicant's longstanding pain complaints, including radicular pain complaints, given the failure of multiple classes of first-line oral pharmaceuticals. Therefore, the request was medically necessary.