

Case Number:	CM15-0060252		
Date Assigned:	04/06/2015	Date of Injury:	03/05/1997
Decision Date:	05/13/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/13/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/30/2015

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: Pennsylvania, Ohio, 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 49-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on March 5, 1997. He reported what initially appeared as an ankle injury that also included an element of left lower extremity weakness. He was ultimately found to have a left sciatica and significant lumbar spondylosis. The injured worker was diagnosed as status post LS fusion, left ankle strain and sciatica. Treatment to date has included surgery, physical therapy, diagnostic studies, aqua therapy, injections, exercises and medications. On February 10, 2015, the injured worker complained of pain in the lumbosacral area described as moderate with radiation of pain to the bilateral legs. Factors that aggravate the pain included lifting, bending and standing. The treatment plan included therapy with anti-inflammatory modalities and therapeutic exercises as tolerated for the affected are for four weeks.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical therapy 3 times a week for 4 weeks for the lumbar spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Guidelines Page(s): 99.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98-99.

Decision rationale: MTUS encourages physical therapy with an emphasis on active forms of treatment and patient education. This guideline recommends transition from supervised therapy to active independent home rehabilitation. Given the timeline of this injury and past treatment, the patient would be anticipated to have previously transitioned to such an independent home rehabilitation program. The records do not provide a rationale at this time for additional supervised rather than independent rehabilitation. This request is not medically necessary.