

Case Number:	CM15-0063497		
Date Assigned:	04/09/2015	Date of Injury:	04/30/1997
Decision Date:	05/08/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/12/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/03/2015

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: 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 injured worker is a 47-year-old male who sustained an industrial injury on April 30, 1997. He has reported leg weakness and pain in the thigh and has been diagnosed with depression, diabetes, and hypertension. Treatment has included epidural injection, medical imaging, modified work duty, and medications. Currently the injured worker had pain in the low back and both legs described as constant. He has a prior L3-5 fusion and is diagnosed with severe junction syndrome with neurogenic claudication. Surgery has been requested. The treatment request included a post op TLSO and post op wheeled walker.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Post-op TLSO purchase: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Low Back Chapter, Back Brace, Postoperative (Fusion).

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Back Brace Post Fusion.

Decision rationale: It is not clear if the surgery has been authorized, but this request is for post op DME and it is assumed that it would not be utilized/authorized unless this patient is post op. MTUS Guidelines do not discuss this issue. ODG Guidelines address this issue in detail and recommend a case by case evaluation. This individual has had prior multilevel fusion and would certainly qualify for aggressive immobilization if the adjacent segment is fused. In particular this would be supported with the history of stenosis and claudication. Under these circumstances and if surgery is performed, the Post-op TLSO purchase is consistent with Guideline and is medically

Post-op wheeled walker purchase: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Knee & Leg chapter, Walking Aids.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines Walking Aids.

Decision rationale: MTUS Guidelines do not address this issue. ODG Guidelines address this issue in the knee section and recommend walking aids to assist in ambulation and diminish painful weight bearing on the injured/painful body part. These same principles would apply if this individual has the requested surgery. The surgery is complicated by a prior multilevel fusion and the presence of neurogenic claudication. The principles of early ambulation and weight unloading of the injured body part is supported by Guidelines. If this individual has the requested surgery, the post-op wheeled walker purchase is medically necessary.