

Case Number:	CM15-0066113		
Date Assigned:	04/14/2015	Date of Injury:	10/23/2010
Decision Date:	05/15/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/11/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/08/2015

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, California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This is a 68 year old male patient, who sustained an industrial injury on October 23, 2010. The diagnoses include right shoulder injury and status post right shoulder surgery. Per the doctor's note dated 1/16/2015, he had complaints of chronic shoulder pain. He uses his TENS unit mostly for pain control; however the leads are not working. The physical examination revealed no pain upon palpation of the right shoulder girdle. The medications list includes tramadol, omeprazole, analgesic cream and TENS unit. Treatment to date has included home exercise program, medications, and TENS unit.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

DME PURCHASE OF A TENS UNIT: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines TENS.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines TENS, chronic pain (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) Page(s): 114-116.

Decision rationale: DME Purchase of a TENS Unit. Patient was using TENS for this injury. Response to TENS unit in terms of objective functional improvement and decreased need for medications is not specified in the records provided. According the cited guidelines, TENS is not recommended as a primary treatment modality, but a one-month home-based TENS trial may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option, if used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration, for the conditions described below. While TENS may reflect the long-standing accepted standard of care within many medical communities, the results of studies are inconclusive; the published trials do not provide information on the stimulation parameters, which are most likely to provide optimum pain relief, nor do they answer questions about long-term effectiveness. Recommendations by types of pain: A home-based treatment trial of one month may be appropriate for neuropathic pain and CRPS II (conditions that have limited published evidence for the use of TENS as noted below), and for CRPS I (with basically no literature to support use). Per the MTUS chronic pain guidelines, there is no high grade scientific evidence to support the use or effectiveness of electrical stimulation for chronic pain. Cited guidelines do not recommend TENS for chronic pain. The patient does not have any objective evidence of CRPS I and CRPS II that is specified in the records provided. Any evidence of diminished effectiveness of medications or intolerance to medications is not specified in the records provided. The medical necessity of DME Purchase of a TENS Unit is not established for this patient and is not medically necessary.