

Case Number:	CM15-0069226		
Date Assigned:	04/16/2015	Date of Injury:	06/04/2009
Decision Date:	05/28/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/26/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/13/2015

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

Certification(s)/Specialty: Internal Medicine, Hospice & Palliative 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 55 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 6/4/2009. He reported being hit by a golf cart. The injured worker was diagnosed as having lumbar disc disease, lumbar sprain/strain, status post bilateral knee arthroscopy, and right ankle sprain/strain. Lumbar magnetic resonance imaging showed mild foraminal stenosis and chronic degenerative disc changes. Treatment to date has included surgery, physical therapy and medication management. In a progress note dated 3/10/2015, the injured worker complains of low back pain, bilateral hip and right knee pain. The treating physician is requesting a weight loss program prior to potential lumbar surgery.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Weight loss program to prepare for back surgery: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Treatments Page(s): 30-33. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation The Practical Guide: Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults.

(The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) and the North American Association for the Study of Obesity (NAASO), National Institute of Health Obesity Guideline) http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/prctgd_c.pdf, accessed on 05/23/2015. Jensen MD, et al. 2013 AHA/ACC/TOS Obesity Guideline. J Am Coll Cardiol 2013. Overweight and obese adults - lifestyle weight management, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH53>, accessed on 05/23/2015.

Decision rationale: The MTUS Guidelines recommend that some workers with chronic pain may benefit from multidisciplinary pain programs or interdisciplinary rehabilitation programs that are proven to have successful outcomes for those with conditions that put them at risk of delayed recovery. Evidence-based Guidelines emphasize the importance of a thorough assessment of patients requiring weight loss before prescribing treatment. Some recommended elements include an in-depth review of the persons medical history, history of weight loss and gain, current diet, current exercise level, prior treatments for weight loss and their results, a detailed examination, a thorough exploration of exacerbating issues, a stratification of the current degree of excess weight, and an individualized review of appropriate goals. Treatment plans should then be based on this detailed assessment. The submitted and reviewed documentation indicated the worker experiencing pain in the lower back, hips, and right knee. There were no detailed assessments of the worker's weight as emphasized in evidenced-based Guidelines. Further, the most recent documented examinations all recorded a body mass index in the ideal range. There was no suggestion that the goal of the requested program was to improve the worker's function or decrease pain medication use. There was no discussion describing special circumstances that sufficiently supported this request. In the absence of such evidence, the current request for a weight loss program to prepare for back surgery is not medically necessary.