

Case Number:	CM15-0072443		
Date Assigned:	04/27/2015	Date of Injury:	04/20/1987
Decision Date:	05/22/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/23/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/16/2015

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 63-year-old who has filed a claim for chronic mid and low back pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of February 28, 1987. In a Utilization Review report dated March 23, 2015, the claims administrator failed to approve a request for psychological testing, apparently as a precursor to pursuit of a spinal cord stimulator trial. The claims administrator referenced a progress note of March 30, 2015 and a RFA form of March 16, 2015 in its determination. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On February 10, 2015, the applicant was given refills of Vicoprofen and Duragesic. On March 3, 2015, the applicant reported moderate-to-severe low back pain radiating to the bilateral legs, 7-9/10. The attending provider suggested that the applicant would be bedridden without his medications. The applicant was severely obese, with a BMI of 43. The applicant's medications included terazosin, Vicoprofen, Zetia, Duragesic, Neurontin, Lotensin, Effexor, Ecotrin, and Crestor. Multiple medications were renewed, including Vicoprofen and Duragesic. The applicant did have ongoing issues with depression. The note was very difficult to follow, mingled historical issues with current issues, it was noted in several sections of the note. The progress note contained no explicit references for the need for psychological testing or spinal cord stimulator trial. Similarly, an earlier note of January 2, 2015 likewise made no mention of the applicant's pursuing a psychological testing and/or spinal cord stimulator trial.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

BHI Psych testing, spinal cord stimulator lead placement - trial: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Psychological evaluations, IDDS & SCS (intrathecal drug delivery systems & spinal cord stimulators); Psychological evaluations Page(s): 100-101.

Decision rationale: No, the request for BHI psychological testing as a precursor to pursuit of a spinal cord stimulator trial was not medically necessary, medically appropriate, or indicated here. While pages 100-101 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines do recommend psychological evaluations pre-spinal cord stimulator trial and do support psychological evaluations to include a Brief Battery for Health Improvement (BBHI) test, in this case, however, the March 3, 2015 progress note at issue contained no references to the applicant's considering or contemplating a spinal cord stimulator trial. The information on file, in short, failed to support or substantiate the request. Therefore, the request was not medically necessary.