

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0074982		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	04/24/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/26/2011
<b>Decision Date:</b>	05/27/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	03/27/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	04/20/2015

### 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: New York, Tennessee  
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Emergency 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 35 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 4/26/2011. He reported injury from working as a fish monger. The mechanism of injury was not provided for review. The injured worker was diagnosed as having lumbar disc herniation. There is no record of a recent diagnostic study. Treatment to date was not included for review with the exception of medications. In a progress note dated 3/9/2015, the injured worker complains of low back pain with spasms and tightness. The treating physician is requesting TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) unit.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**TENS Unit related to the low Back injury, as an outpatient:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines TENS Page(s): 114-117.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines.

**Decision rationale:** TENS units are 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, including reductions in medication use, for neuropathic pain, phantom limb pain, spasticity, and multiple sclerosis. Several published evidence-based assessments of transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) have found that evidence is lacking concerning effectiveness. Functional restoration programs (FRPs) are designed to use a medically directed, interdisciplinary pain management approach geared specifically to patients with chronic disabling occupational musculoskeletal disorders. These programs emphasize the importance of function over the elimination of pain. FRPs incorporate components of exercise progression with disability management and psychosocial intervention. In this case there is no documentation that the TENS unit will be used as an adjunct to FRP. In addition, there is no documentation of successful one-month trial at home. The request should not be authorized.