

Case Number:	CM15-0077322		
Date Assigned:	05/01/2015	Date of Injury:	06/30/2002
Decision Date:	06/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/06/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/22/2015

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 Jersey, Alabama, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Neuromuscular 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 50 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 06/30/02. Initial complaints and diagnoses are not available. Treatments to date include medications and back surgery. Diagnostic studies include a MIR of the lumbar spine. Current compliant include low back and lower extremity pain. Current diagnoses include failed back surgery syndrome, lumbar radiculopathy, lumbar disc disease, and lumbar facet arthropathy. In a progress note dated 03/14/15, the treating provider reports the plan of care as a left transforaminal epidural steroid injection at L5-S1. The requested treatment is a left transforaminal epidural steroid injection at L5-S1.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Transforaminal epidural steroid injection, L5-S1, under fluoroscopic guidance: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines
 Page(s): 64.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints
 Page(s): 309.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, epidural steroid injection is optional for radicular pain to avoid surgery. It may offer short-term benefit; however, there is no significant long-term benefit or reduction for the need of surgery. There is no evidence that the patient has been unresponsive to conservative treatments. In addition, there is no recent clinical and objective documentation of radiculopathy including MRI or EMG/NCV findings. MTUS guidelines do not recommend epidural injections for back pain without radiculopathy. Therefore, the request for Transforaminal epidural steroid injection, L5-S1, under fluoroscopic guidance is not medically necessary.