

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0090659		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	05/14/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	11/13/1987
<b>Decision Date:</b>	06/16/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	04/14/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	05/11/2015

### 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: North Carolina

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:

The injured worker is a 67 year old, male who sustained a work related injury on 11/13/87. He was shoveling soap and fell through a cat walk. The diagnoses have included left knee degenerative joint disease; status post left knee replacement and possible sciatica. Treatments have included left knee replacement, medications, physical therapy, home exercises, cold therapy and knee injections. In the PR-2 dated 3/16/15, the injured worker complains of pain in both legs. The pain radiates down the back of the legs. He feels like his legs get "rubbery" if he walks any distance. On physical examination, he has pain that goes down the anterior left thigh and down into the left anterior shin. He has stocking distribution numbness. The treatment plan includes recommendation for an EMG/NCV studies of legs.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Electromyogram (EMG)/Nerve conduction study (NCS) of the right lower extremity:**

Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints  
Page(s): 303.

**Decision rationale:** The ACOEM chapters on low back complaints and the need for lower extremity EMG/NCV states: Unequivocal objective findings that identify specific nerve compromise on the neurologic examination are sufficient evidence to warrant imaging in patients who do not respond to treatment and who would consider surgery an option. When the neurologic examination is less clear, however, further physiologic evidence of nerve dysfunction should be obtained before ordering an imaging study. Indiscriminant imaging will result in false-positive findings, such as disk bulges, that are not the source of painful symptoms and do not warrant surgery. If physiologic evidence indicates tissue insult or nerve impairment, the practitioner can discuss with a consultant the selection of an imaging test to define a potential cause (magnetic resonance imaging [MRI] for neural or other soft tissue, computer tomography [CT] for bony structures). Electromyography (EMG), including H-reflex tests, may be useful to identify subtle, focal neurologic dysfunction in patients with low back symptoms lasting more than three or four weeks. There are unequivocal objective findings of nerve compromise on the neurologic exam provided for review. However, there is not mention of surgical consideration. There are no unclear neurologic findings on exam. For these reasons, criteria for lower extremity EMG/NCV have not been met as set forth in the ACOEM. Therefore, the request is not certified.