

Case Number:	CM15-0093607		
Date Assigned:	05/19/2015	Date of Injury:	04/24/1992
Decision Date:	06/24/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/13/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/14/2015

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 73-year-old who has filed a claim for chronic neck and low back pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of April 24, 1992. In a Utilization Review report dated May 13, 2015, the claims administrator retrospectively denied lumbar spine x-rays performed on April 7, 2015. The claims administrator referenced an office visit and x-rays of the lumbar spine dated April 7, 2015 demonstrating the presence of lumbar spine fusion hardware. The treating provider stated that the applicant had issues with osteoporosis and suggested that the applicant begin Forteo for the same, the claims administrator reported. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On January 29, 2015, the applicant's spine surgeon stated that the applicant had severe spinal stenosis at L3-L4 and L4-L5 with associated scoliosis. A two-level lumbar decompression procedure was sought. On February 10, 2015, the applicant was described as status post earlier lumbar spine surgery on January 30, 2015. The applicant was using Norco, Catapres, Amitiza, and Duragesic, it was suggested on that date. The applicant received multiple medication refills. On February 25, 2015, the applicant's spine surgeon stated that he believed the applicant had had a satisfactory response to the earlier spine surgery. Current x-rays of the lumbar spine were endorsed. The remainder of the file was surveyed. It did not appear that either the April 7, 2015 progress note and/or associated x-rays were incorporated into the IMR packet.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Retro Current X-Rays of the Lumbar spine done on 4/7/15: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Work Loss Data Institute, ODG Treatment in Workers Compensation, 10th Edition, Treatment Index Low Back (updated 04/29/15).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 304.

Decision rationale: Yes, the request for x-rays of the lumbar spine performed on April 7, 2015 were medically necessary, medically appropriate, and indicated here. As noted in the MTUS Guideline in ACOEM Chapter 12, page 304, an imaging study may be appropriate for an applicant whose limitations due to consistent symptoms have persisted for one month or more to further evaluate the possibility of potentially serious pathology. Here, the applicant had undergone earlier lumbar spine surgery. The applicant, per the claims administrator's description of events on April 7, 2015, had issues with osteoporosis apparently uncovered on x-rays of April 7, 2015. The treating provider did apparently act on the results of the lumbar spine x-ray at issue and went on to suggest that the applicant begin Forteo, it was suggested above. The lumbar spine x-rays of April 7, 2015, thus, were indicated, did establish the presence of osteoporosis, and did influence the decision to begin Forteo. Therefore, the request was medically necessary.