

Notice of Independent Medical Review Determination

Dated: 12/13/2013

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Employee:	[REDACTED]
Claim Number:	[REDACTED]
Date of UR Decision:	7/12/2013
Date of Injury:	1/12/1995
IMR Application Received:	8/9/2013
MAXIMUS Case Number:	CM13-0009176

- 1) MAXIMUS Federal Services, Inc. has determined the request for **bilateral cervical epidural steroid injection C5-6 is not medically necessary and appropriate.**

INDEPENDENT MEDICAL REVIEW DECISION AND RATIONALE

An application for Independent Medical Review was filed on 8/9/2013 disputing the Utilization Review Denial dated 7/12/2013. A Notice of Assignment and Request for Information was provided to the above parties on 9/12/2013. A decision has been made for each of the treatment and/or services that were in dispute:

- 1) MAXIMUS Federal Services, Inc. has determined the request for **bilateral cervical epidural steroid injection C5-6 is not medically necessary and appropriate.**

Medical Qualifications of the Expert Reviewer:

The independent Medical Doctor who made the decision has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The physician reviewer is Board Certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and is licensed to practice in California. 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 treatments and/or services at issue.

Expert Reviewer Case Summary:

The underlying injury date in this case is 01/12/1995. This patient is a 54-year-old man with the diagnosis of a C6 radiculopathy, refractory to extensive conservative treatment and with recent worsening of cervical radicular symptoms. Physical examination findings as of 04/19/2013 demonstrated left paraspinal tenderness with decreased left C6 sensation. Past MRI findings have included neural encroachment at C5-C6 with bilateral C5-C6 involvement. Initial peer review noted that the patient had a condition for which a diagnostic epidural steroid injection was indicated, although in the absence of a formal imaging report there was no documentation that diagnostic imaging was ambiguous.

Documents Reviewed for Determination:

The following relevant documents received from the interested parties and the documents provided with the application were reviewed and considered. These documents included:

- Application of Independent Medical Review
- Utilization Review Determination
- Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS)
- Medical Records from:
 - Claims Administrator
 - Employee/Employee Representative
 - Provider

1) Regarding the request for bilateral cervical epidural steroid injection C5-6:

Section of the Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule Relied Upon by the Expert Reviewer to Make His/Her Decision

The Claims Administrator based its decision on the Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, which is part of the MTUS. The Claims Administrator also cited the Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) and the American Medical Association (AMA) Guides, which is not part of the MTUS.

The Expert Reviewer based his/her decision on the Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, Epidural steroid injections, page 46, which is part of the MTUS.

Rationale for the Decision:

The Chronic Pain Guidelines indicate, "There is insufficient evidence to make any recommendation for the use of epidural steroid injections to treat radicular cervical pain...The purpose of an epidural steroid injection is to reduce pain in treatment...facilitating progress in a more active treatment program...but this treatment alone offers no significant long-term functional benefit." The medical records provided for review indicate that the employee has undergone extensive past functional restoration treatment. The medical records do not show evidence of additional functional goals, or any way in which an epidural injection currently would be incorporated as part of an ongoing program of functional restoration. The medical records do not focus upon or clarify the ways in which this proposed treatment would facilitate progress in active treatment. **The request for bilateral cervical epidural steroid injection C5-6 is not medically necessary and appropriate.**

Effect of the Decision:

The determination of MAXIMUS Federal Services and its physician reviewer is deemed to be the final determination of the Administrative Director, Division of Workers' Compensation. With respect to the medical necessity of the treatment in dispute, this determination is binding on all parties.

In accordance with California Labor Code Section 4610.6(h), a determination of the administrative director may be reviewed only if a verified appeal is filed with the appeals board for hearing and served on all interested parties within 30 days of the date of mailing of the determination to the employee or the employer. The determination of the administrative director shall be presumed to be correct and shall be set aside only upon proof by clear and convincing evidence of one or more of the grounds for appeal listed in Labor Code Section 4610.6(h)(1) through (5).

Sincerely,

Paul Manchester, MD, MPH
Medical Director

cc: Department of Industrial Relations
Division of Workers' Compensation
1515 Clay Street, 18th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

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Disclaimer: MAXIMUS is providing an independent review service under contract with the California Department of Industrial Relations. MAXIMUS is not engaged in the practice of law or medicine. Decisions about the use or nonuse of health care services and treatments are the sole responsibility of the patient and the patient's physician. MAXIMUS is not liable for any consequences arising from these decisions.