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| Case Number: | CM14-0056434 | | |
| Date Assigned: | 07/09/2014 | Date of Injury: | 05/13/2013 |
| Decision Date: | 11/10/2015 | UR Denial Date: | 04/11/2014 |
| Priority: | Standard | Application Received: | 04/25/2014 |

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: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Chiropractic

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 49 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 5-13-2013. Medical records indicate the worker is undergoing treatment for chronic lumbar discogenic back pain. The only recent progress report provided dated 10-21-2013, reported the injured worker complained of thoracic-lumbar pain rated 2-3 out of 10. Physical examination revealed lumbosacral tenderness with no spasm and full lumbar range of motion. Treatment to date has included chiropractic care, physical therapy and medication management. The injured worker states "things have not changed much with chiropractic care and physical therapy but massage therapy gave him temporary relief". The physician is requesting Additional Chiropractic Therapy 2 times a week for 3 weeks (6) for the lower back. On 4-11-2014, the Utilization Review noncertified the request for Additional Chiropractic Therapy 2 times a week for 3 weeks (6) for the lower back.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Additional Chiropractic Therapy 2 times a week for 3 weeks (6) for the lower back: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Manual therapy & manipulation. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low Back/Manipulation.

Decision rationale: The patient has received chiropractic care for his lumbar spine injury in the past. The past chiropractic treatment notes are not present in the materials provided. The total number of chiropractic sessions provided to date are unknown and not specified in the records provided for review, however the UR review notes indicate 18 sessions completed to date. Regardless, the treatment records submitted for review do not show objective functional improvement with past chiropractic care rendered, per MTUS definitions. The MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines recommends additional care with evidence of objective functional improvement. The ODG Low Back Chapter also recommends 1-2 additional chiropractic care sessions over 4-6 months with evidence of objective functional improvement. The MTUS-Definitions page 1 defines functional improvement as a "clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions as measured during the history and physical exam, performed and documented as part of the evaluation and management visit billed under the Official Medical Fee Schedule (OMFS) pursuant to Sections 9789.10-9789.11; and a reduction in the dependency on continued medical treatment." There have been no objective functional improvements with the care in the past per the PTP's progress notes reviewed. In fact, the PTP states in a report that chiropractic has not been of much benefit to the patient. The 6 sessions requested far exceed The MTUS recommended number. I find that the 6 additional chiropractic sessions requested to the lumbar spine not medically necessary or appropriate.