

Case Number:	CM13-0012307		
Date Assigned:	06/06/2014	Date of Injury:	09/02/1991
Decision Date:	07/28/2014	UR Denial Date:	07/29/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/12/2013

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. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Family Medicine and is licensed to practice in Arizona. 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

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 patient is a 59 year old female with a date of injury on 7/29/2013. Subjective complaints are of bilateral knee pain. There was also reported depression, hypertension and a recent loss of 25 pounds. Physical exam shows tenderness along knees, mild swelling, and mild decreased range of motion. Prior treatment includes a knee brace, medications, and physical therapy. The patient has had prior physical therapy without documentation of subjective or objective benefit.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Pool Therapy: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aqua Therapy.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aquatic Therapy Page(s): 22. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG Physical Therapy, Aquatic Therapy.

Decision rationale: The California MTUS recommends aquatic therapy as an alternative to land based therapy specifically if reduced weight bearing is desirable, for example extreme obesity. The ODG recommends aquatic therapy as an optional form of exercise therapy, where available, as an alternative to land-based physical therapy. Aquatic therapy (including swimming) can

minimize the effects of gravity, so it is specifically recommended where reduced weight bearing is desirable, for example extreme obesity. For this patient, there is no documentation that her home exercise program was not effective. Furthermore, there are no apparent indications that would require the patient to utilize special exercise equipment or a pool. Therefore, for these reasons, the medical necessity of aquatic therapy is not established.

Pool Program For 6 Months At [REDACTED]: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aqua Therapy.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aquatic Therapy Page(s): 22. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, Physical Therapy, Aquatic Therapy, Gym Membership.

Decision rationale: The California MTUS recommends aquatic therapy as an alternative to land based therapy specifically if reduced weight bearing is desirable, for example extreme obesity. The ODG recommends aquatic therapy as an optional form of exercise therapy, where available, as an alternative to land-based physical therapy. Aquatic therapy (including swimming) can minimize the effects of gravity, so it is specifically recommended where reduced weight bearing is desirable, for example extreme obesity. The ODG states that gym memberships are not recommended as a medical prescription unless a home exercise program has not been effective and there is a need for equipment. Plus, treatment needs to be monitored and administered by medical professionals. For this patient, there is no documentation that her home exercise program was not effective. Furthermore, there are no apparent indications that would require the patient to utilize special exercise equipment or a pool. Therefore, for these reasons, the medical necessity of a gym membership and aquatic therapy is not established.