

Case Number:	CM13-0040375		
Date Assigned:	12/20/2013	Date of Injury:	04/25/2012
Decision Date:	03/10/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/15/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/29/2013

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to a physician reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The physician reviewer is Board Certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, has a subspecialty in Pain Management 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 physician 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:

This is a 36-year-old male with date of injury of 04/25/2012. Per treating physician's report 09/26/2013, listed diagnostic impressions are: bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome, and repetitive strain injury in the neck and bilateral upper extremities. The patient's presenting symptoms are pain in bilateral forearms, aching, burning, numb, sharp, shooting, and throbbing along with numbness and tingling in the ulnar distribution on the right side. Prior EMG/NCV studies were negative and the treating physician has asked for repeat EMG/NCV studies. Six sessions of myofascial therapy, biofeedback treatments and voice recognition training for Excel were requested. The patient remained fit for full duty. The patient's job is that of sales analyst, works on computer all day, repetitive in nature. The patient was able to return to modified duty until carpal tunnel surgery in October 2012. He then returned to work on 01/13/2013 and continued to work full duty in spite of pain.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Four sessions of voice recognition: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints Page(s): 262.

Decision rationale: The ACOEM Guidelines chapter 11 discussed how a clinician may recommend work and activity modifications or ergonomic design of the workplace to facilitate, recovery, and prevent recurrence. In this case, the patient has returned to work despite pain and symptoms. The treating physician's request for 4 training sessions with voice recognition to train this patient for voice recognition software is medically reasonable and consistent with the ergonomic adjustments and interventions that are discussed in ACOEM Guidelines. According to the medical records provided for review this patient presents with persistent bilateral upper extremity symptoms. The patient continues to work full duty and the patient is status post carpal tunnel release back in 2012. The treating physician's report, 09/26/2013, states that the patient continues to work despite pain and has been working full time. The treating physician has requested voice recognition training for Excel, for 4 sessions. The ultimate goal of all injured worker and rehabilitation process is that of return to work. This has been accomplished for this patient. However, given the patient's history of carpal tunnel release, persistent symptoms in the upper extremities, there is always a risk of worsening of the symptoms and eventual compromise of the patient's function at work. Voice recognition software is a means to decrease repetitive keyboarding activity that the patient is described to be doing at work. Recommendation is for authorization. The request for four sessions of voice recognition is medically necessary and appropriate.