

Case Number:	CM13-0043438		
Date Assigned:	12/27/2013	Date of Injury:	01/24/2011
Decision Date:	04/18/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/16/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/22/2013

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 Occupational Medicine 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 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 38-year-old female with a 1/24/11 date of injury, status post left knee surgery 4/12/12. At the time (10/16/13) of request for authorization for TENS unit, there is documentation of subjective (bilateral knee pain) and objective (restricted knee ROM, tenderness upon palpation of the left medial knee and tenderness at prepatellar region of the left knee, 2+ edema left knee) findings,, current diagnoses (left knee internal derangement, status post left knee arthroscopy, right knee mild edema within the superolateral aspect of Hoffa's fat pad, degenerative changes involving the right patellofemoral joint, early degenerative changes involving bilateral medial compartments, bilateral knee DJD), and treatment to date (medications, PT, acupuncture, and TENS unit 30 day trial). 10/15/13 medical report identified that the TENS unit decreased pain from 5-6/10 to 1/10 for greater than 2 hours, and that the TENS will be used with a home exercise program. There is no documentation of how often the unit was used and other ongoing pain treatment during the trial period (including medication use).

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TENS UNIT: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 114, 116.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines
ELECTRICAL STIMULATION Page(s): 113-117.

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation of pain of at least three months duration, evidence that other appropriate pain modalities have been tried (including medication) and failed, a statement identifying that the TENS unit will be used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration, and a treatment plan including the specific short- and long-term goals of treatment with the TENS, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of a month trial of a TENS unit. In addition, MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation of how often the unit was used, outcomes in terms of pain relief and function, and other ongoing pain treatment during the trial period (including medication use), as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of continued TENS unit. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of mild edema within the superolateral aspect of Hoffa's fat pad, degenerative changes involving the right patellofemoral joint, early degenerative changes involving bilateral medial compartments, bilateral knee DJD. In addition, there is documentation of a TENS unit 30 day trial, and that this decreased pain from 5-6/10 to 1/10 for greater than 2 hours, and that the TENS will be used with a home exercise program. However, there is no documentation of how often the unit was used and other ongoing pain treatment during the trial period (including medication use). Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for TENS units is not medically necessary.