

Case Number:	CM13-0050051		
Date Assigned:	03/28/2014	Date of Injury:	07/05/2011
Decision Date:	06/11/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/09/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/08/2013

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 Neurology, has a subspecialty in Neuromuscular Medicine and is licensed to practice in New Jersey. 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:

██████████ is a 51-year-old man who sustained a work related injury on July 05 2011. Subsequently, he developed neck and back pain with numbness, weakness, and tingling sensation in the right upper extremity. According to a note dated on September 30 2013, his physical examination demonstrated weakness throughout the right upper extremity. The patient was diagnosed with lumbar spine sprain and lumbar disc displacement. On January 30, 2012, the patient underwent a micro-discectomy at the L4-L5. According to the patient, the lumbar spine surgery provided some benefits but denies attending postoperative physical therapy. His provider requested authorization for 4 weeks of physical therapy.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

PHYSICAL THERAPY 2X4 CERVICAL SPINE: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine..

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine, Page(s): 98.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, Physical Medicine is <Recommended as indicated below. Passive therapy (those treatment modalities that do not require energy

expenditure on the part of the patient) can provide short term relief during the early phases of pain treatment and are directed at controlling symptoms such as pain, inflammation and swelling and to improve the rate of healing soft tissue injuries. They can be used sparingly with active therapies to help control swelling, pain and inflammation during the rehabilitation process. Active therapy is based on the philosophy that therapeutic exercise and/or activity are beneficial for restoring flexibility, strength, endurance, function, range of motion, and can alleviate discomfort. Active therapy requires an internal effort by the individual to complete a specific exercise or task. This form of therapy may require supervision from a therapist or medical provider such as verbal, visual and/or tactile instruction(s). Patients are instructed and expected to continue active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement levels. Home exercise can include exercise with or without mechanical assistance or resistance and functional activities with assistive devices (Colorado, 2002) (Airaksinen, 2006) Patient-specific hand therapy is very important in reducing swelling, decreasing pain, and improving range of motion in CRPS. (Li, 2005) The use of active treatment modalities (e.g., exercise, education, activity modification) instead of passive treatments is associated with substantially better clinical outcomes. In a large case series of patients with low back pain treated by physical therapists, those adhering to guidelines for active rather than passive treatments incurred fewer treatment visits, cost less, and had less pain and less disability. The overall success rates were 64.7% among those adhering to the active treatment recommendations versus 36.5% for passive treatment. (Fritz, 2007)>. There is no documentation of objective findings that support skilled physical therapy. The patient did not carry deficit that required a supervised physical therapy. Therefore Physical therapy 2x4 Cervical Spine is not medically necessary.