MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM13-0054447		
Date Assigned:	12/30/2013	Date of Injury:	02/03/2011
Decision Date:	03/15/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/28/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/19/2013

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 male patient with a date of injury of February 3, 2011. A utilization review determination date October 28, 2013 recommends noncertification of paraffin bath and paraffin. The utilization review denial indicates that the requesting physician "acknowledged limitations of evidence-based guidelines support for the request to the foot but thought that the patient's analogous midfoot arthritis and exhaustion of previous conservative methods, including attempts to provide heat to midfoot, would meet the similar criteria for the request for arthritic hands. He intends to provide this documentation in the context of a subsequent request." A progress report dated September 26, 2013 includes a diagnosis of right foot contusion with torso metatarsal joint arthrosis and reactive osseous changes from the contusion injuries. The interval history indicates that the patient's nerve pain has been reduced with medication and paresthesias have decreased as well. The note indicates that the patient does slow walking and physical therapy. The physical examination identifies and on equal and asymmetrical gait and pain with squatting and toe walking on the right. Tarsal tunnel testing identifies pain radiating into the soul of the foot. Proximal articulations of the cuneiform were tender. There is reduced strength in the right lower extremity. The treatment plan indicates that a paraffin bath was requested on September 26, 2013.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Paraffin bath and paraffin to be applied to bottom of right foot: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Chapter, Paraffin Wax Baths

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for paraffin wax bath for the feet, California MTUS and ODG do not address this request. ODG states that paraffin wax baths are recommended as an option for arthritic hands if used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based conservative care (exercise). A search of the national Library of medicine revealed a study indicating that paraffin wax bath treatment may improve posttraumatic stiff ankle. This study demonstrated that joint mobilization and wax bath therapy is an effective and beneficial tool to improve the symptoms and quality of life in posttraumatic stiff ankle patients. Within the documentation available for review, there is no indication that the paraffin wax bath will be used with mobilization. No additional research supporting the use of this modality has been provided for review. As such, the currently requested paraffin wax bath to be applied to the bottom of the right foot is not medically necessary.