

Case Number:	CM13-0068002		
Date Assigned:	03/21/2014	Date of Injury:	06/13/2013
Decision Date:	05/29/2014	UR Denial Date:	11/26/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/19/2013

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 Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation 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 27-year-old female with a 6/13/13 date of injury. At the time (11/26/13) of request for authorization for physical therapy 2 times per week for 4 weeks to the right wrist, there is documentation of subjective (right hand and wrist pain, numbness and tingling of the right and wrist) and objective (sensation decreased to light touch in the median nerve distribution on the right; positive Phalen's and carpal compression test) findings, current diagnoses (carpal tunnel syndrome, right hand; DeQuervain's tenosynovitis, right wrist; and repetitive stress injury, right hand/wrist), and treatment to date (bracing, activity modification, right carpal tunnel injection, medications, and physical therapy). 9/27/13 medical report identifies that patient believes she received 3-4 physical therapy sessions to the right hand and wrist and states this did not help. There is no documentation of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services as a result of physical therapy visits completed to date.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

PHYSICAL THERAPY 2 TIMES PER WEEK FOR 4 WEEKS TO THE RIGHT WRIST:
Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation OFFICIAL DISABILITY GUIDELINES,

TREATMENT IN WORKER'S COMP 18TH EDITION, 2013 UPDATES, CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME CHAPTER-PT ODG PHYSICAL MEDICINE GUIDELINES.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines SECTION ON PHYSICAL MEDICINE Page(s): 98. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation DISABILITY GUIDELINES (ODG) CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME, FOREARM/WRIST/HAND CHAPTER, PHYSICAL THERAPY (PT).

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines support a brief course of physical medicine for patients with chronic pain not to exceed 10 visits over 4-8 weeks with allowance for fading of treatment frequency, with transition to an active self-directed program of independent home physical medicine/therapeutic exercise. MTUS-Definitions identifies that any treatment intervention should not be continued in the absence of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services. ODG recommends a limited course of physical therapy for patients with a diagnosis of carpal tunnel syndrome not to exceed 1-3 visits over 3-5 weeks. In addition, ODG recommends a limited course of physical therapy for patients with a diagnosis of radial styloid tenosynovitis (DeQuervain's) not to exceed 12 visits over 8 weeks. ODG also notes patients should be formally assessed after a "six-visit clinical trial" to see if the patient is moving in a positive direction, no direction, or a negative direction (prior to continuing with the physical therapy) and when treatment requests exceeds guideline recommendations, the physician must provide a statement of exceptional factors to justify going outside of guideline parameters. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of carpal tunnel syndrome, right hand; DeQuervain's tenosynovitis, right wrist; and repetitive stress injury, right hand/wrist. In addition, there is documentation of 3-4 physical therapy visits completed to date. However, given documentation that patient states that previous physical therapy sessions to the right hand and wrist did not help, there is no documentation of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services as a result of physical therapy visits completed to date. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for physical therapy 2 times per week for 4 weeks to the right wrist is not medically necessary.