

Case Number:	CM14-0001768		
Date Assigned:	01/29/2014	Date of Injury:	04/12/2007
Decision Date:	08/12/2014	UR Denial Date:	01/01/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/06/2014

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:

The patient had a nerve conduction study dated 09/09/2011 performed on the upper extremity and it revealed a normal EMG study but abnormal NCV showing mild slowing of the motor branch of the ulnar nerve across the elbows, bilaterally. On hand therapy note dated 12/30/2013, the patient presented with complaints of significant pain and hypersensitivity at right thumb scar site. He had decreased range of motion, decreased functional strength and decreased ability to participate in activities of daily living. On exam, the patient was instructed on exercises including AROM to wrist, all digits, thumb (except thumb CMC joint). She was also instructed on home exercise program and TENS unit (trial) to right volar/dorsal thumb. On assessment, he has improved with self range of motion exercises and rehab potential is good. Progress report dated 09/18/2013 states the patient complained of persistent right wrist pain. On exam he has tenderness at the first carpometacarpal joint. The push and pull grind maneuvers were positive. Tinel's sign is positive at the volar wrist crease as well as positive Phalen's sign. He has a diagnosis of bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome and first carpometacarpal joint pain. Prior utilization review dated 01/01/2014 states the request for 10 physical therapy visits for right wrist is not certified as it is not determined to be medically necessary; however, exercise is recommended by the guidelines to restore strength and function.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

10 Physical Therapy Visits For Right Wrist: Overturned

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98-99, Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 15-16 and 18-19. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, Forearm, Wrist, and Hand, Physical Therapy.

Decision rationale: This is a request for 10 physical therapy visits for the R wrist for a 62-year-old male injured on 4/12/07 status post R carpal tunnel release and R 1st CMC joint fusion on 9/19/13. According to MTUS Post-surgical guidelines, 24 sessions of physical therapy over 8 weeks in a 4-month treatment period are recommended after wrist/finger arthroplasty/fusion for arthropathy. 3-8 visits are recommended for post-surgical treatment of carpal tunnel syndrome. Provided medical records document ongoing functional improvement from physical therapy. The number of physical therapy sessions completed at the time of this request is not entirely clear from the available records, but it appears to be less than 24. Medical necessity is established for an additional 10 sessions of physical therapy up through 1/19/14 (4-month treatment period) provided that this does not exceed 24 total visits since the patient's 9/19/13 surgery.