

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0015050		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	02/28/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	11/10/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	07/31/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	02/03/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	02/06/2014

### 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 Orthopedic Surgery, 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 is a 48-year-old male who has submitted a claim for the nontraumatic rupture of achilles tendon associated with an industrial injury date of November 10, 2012. Medical records from 2013-2014 were reviewed. The patient complained of left ankle foot pain. Physical examination of the left ankle showed limping gait favoring the left lower extremity, diffuse swelling with hyperpronation, limitation of motion, and tenderness over the lateral ligamentous complex, subtalar and talonavicular joint regions. X-rays of the left ankle were negative for fracture and consistent with prior x-rays revealing calcification of the Achilles tendon. An MRI of the left ankle obtained on November 21, 2012 revealed a partial Achilles tendon tear (50% to 60%) with mild degenerative changes at the talar, subtalar, and talonavicular joints. Formal reports of the imaging studies were not provided. The diagnoses were left ankle partial Achilles tendon tear (50%-60%) and left ankle mild degenerative joint disease. Left Achilles tendon debridement and grafting were contemplated. Treatment to date has included oral analgesics and physical therapy.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Left ankle surgery:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 14 Ankle and Foot Complaints Page(s): 374.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 14 Ankle and Foot Complaints Page(s): 374. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines.

**Decision rationale:** According to page 374 of the ACOEM guidelines, surgical consultation/intervention may be indicated for patients who have activity limitations for more than one month without signs of functional improvement, failure of exercise programs to increase range of motion and strength of the musculature around the ankle and foot, and clear clinical and imaging evidence of a lesion that has been shown to benefit in both the short and long term from surgical repair. The Official Disability Guidelines recommend open operative treatment of acute Achilles tendon ruptures, as it significantly reduces the risk of re-rupture compared to non-operative treatment. In this case, the patient was diagnosed with left partial Achilles tendon tear and left ankle mild degenerative joint disease. However, the most recent progress reports did not provide a comprehensive physical examination of the left ankle. The formal reports of the imaging studies were also not provided. Moreover, there was no objective evidence of activity limitation or failure of exercise programs to improve symptoms. The request was nonspecific with regards to the laterality and the type of procedure to be performed. The medical necessity has not been established.