

Case Number:	CM14-0110132		
Date Assigned:	08/01/2014	Date of Injury:	09/14/2011
Decision Date:	12/15/2014	UR Denial Date:	06/30/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/15/2014

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 Anesthesiology, 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 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 40-year-old female with a 9/14/11 date of injury. At the time (6/30/14) of Decision for 12-18 sessions of physical therapy (PT) to the cervical spine and bilateral shoulders, there is documentation of subjective (neck pain, right shoulder pain, right elbow pain, and thumb pain) and objective (positive impingement testing of the right shoulder, positive Finkelstein's test on the right wrist, positive axial grind test with tenderness at the radial aspect of the wrist, and right elbow tenderness along the lateral epicondyle) findings, current diagnoses (right shoulder subacromial impingement syndrome and cervical spine strain), and treatment to date (8 right hand/wrist/thumb physical therapy treatments and medications).

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

12-18 sessions of physical therapy (PT) to the cervical spine and bilateral shoulders:

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 based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Neck & Upper back and Shoulder, 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 radiculitis not to exceed 12 visits over 8 weeks and for patients with a diagnosis of Rotator cuff syndrome/ Impingement syndrome not to exceed 10 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 right shoulder subacromial impingement syndrome and cervical spine strain. In addition, given documentation of subjective (neck pain and right shoulder pain) and objective (positive impingement testing of the right shoulder) findings, there is documentation of functional deficits and functional goals. However, the requested 12-18 sessions of physical therapy (PT) to the cervical spine and bilateral shoulders exceeds guideline (for an initial trial). Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for 12-18 sessions of physical therapy (PT) to the cervical spine and bilateral shoulders is not medically necessary.