

Case Number:	CM14-0135441		
Date Assigned:	08/29/2014	Date of Injury:	12/02/2013
Decision Date:	10/08/2014	UR Denial Date:	07/22/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/22/2014

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 Family 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:

This case involves a 60-year-old male patient who reported an industrial injury to the bilateral wrists on 12/2/2013, attributed to the performance of his usual and customary job tasks. The patient underwent a right sided carpal tunnel release (CTR) with good results after the EMG/NCS demonstrated moderate to severe carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS). The patient reports symptoms on the left upper extremities (LUE)/left wrist. The objective findings on examination to the LUE extremity included negative Tinel's and negative Phalen's test; intact sensation to the LUE. The patient was not noted to have any conservative treatment to the LUE. The patient wished to have a left CTR in order to avoid the progression experienced on the right. The diagnosis was bilateral CTS. The treatment plan included a left CTR.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Left carpal tunnel release: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints Page(s): 270-271.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints Page(s): 261-62. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Carpal Tunnel Syndrome---CTR; endoscopic surgery;

Decision rationale: The request for the carpal tunnel release (CTR) surgery is not supported by the findings documented on the left upper extremities (LUE) electrodiagnostic studies as the patient is reported to have mild to moderate carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS). The objective findings on examination documented no sensation deficits and negative CTS testing. The NCV results demonstrated only mild median neuropathy, which does not meet the criteria recommended by the Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) for the provision of carpal tunnel release surgery. The EMG/NCS studies performed did not support the medical necessity of a CTR to the left wrist with the impression of mild CTS. It is not clear that conservative treatment has benefited the patient or whether or not the nerve compression neuropathy of the median nerve has progressed any further. There was no demonstrated failure of conservative care. The recommendations for the authorization of surgical intervention are reserved for "moderate and severe" CTS. The requesting physician did not document the objective physical findings recommended by the CA MTUS for the provision of surgical intervention in cases of moderate CTS. The objective findings on physical examination were documented as referenced above. The documented objective findings are inconsistent with the objective findings recommended by the CA MTUS for the authorization of carpal tunnel release surgical intervention. There was no demonstrated medical necessity for the requested left CTR. As such, this request is not medically necessary.