

Case Number:	CM14-0152869		
Date Assigned:	09/23/2014	Date of Injury:	07/19/2010
Decision Date:	10/24/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/19/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/18/2014

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 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:

This 43 year-old patient sustained an injury on 7/19/10 while employed by [REDACTED]. Request(s) under consideration include Physical Therapy 3x4 Right Hand QTY: 12. The patient is s/p Plebotomy and PRP tissue graft injection at right medial epicondyle on 6/23/11; Right ulnar nerve decompression/ transposition, Z-plasty lengthening of pronator origin on 1/26/12; and right ring and little finger A1 pulley release and cyst excision on 7/10/13. The patient has completed at least 25/24 OT sessions the injury/surgery with last treatment on 5/15/14. Report of 5/29/14 from the provider noted right ring and little finger no longer locking or triggering after the corticosteroid injection; however, now complains of worsening symptoms in the morning. Exam showed focal tenderness over right ring and little fingers A1 pulley area; however, passive IP joint flexion did not elicit locking or triggering. Treatment included medication, finger extension splint, and PT. The request(s) for Physical Therapy 3x4 Right Hand QTY: 12 was non-certified on 8/19/14 citing guidelines criteria and lack of medical necessity.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical Therapy 3x4 Right Hand QTY: 12: 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 Therapy, Physical Medicine Guidelines - Page(s): pages 98-99,.

Decision rationale: Review indicates the patient has completed at least 49 therapy sessions with 25 post right elbow surgery on 3/31/14 and 24 post right ring and little finger surgery on 7/10/13. Clinical exam showed focal tenderness; otherwise had no neurological deficits or locking/trigging seen. Physical therapy is considered medically necessary when the services require the judgment, knowledge, and skills of a qualified physical therapist due to the complexity and sophistication of the therapy and the physical condition of the patient. However, there is no clear measurable evidence of progress with the PT treatment already rendered including milestones of increased ROM, strength, and functional capacity. Review of submitted physician reports show no evidence of functional benefit, unchanged chronic symptom complaints, clinical findings, and work status. There is no evidence documenting functional baseline with clear goals to be reached and the patient striving to reach those goals. The Chronic Pain Guidelines allow for visits of physical therapy with fading of treatment to an independent self-directed home program. It appears the employee has received significant therapy sessions without demonstrated evidence of functional improvement to allow for additional therapy treatments. There is no report of acute flare-up, new injuries, or change in symptom or clinical findings to support for formal PT in a patient that has been instructed on a home exercise program for this chronic injury. Submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication to support further physical therapy when prior treatment rendered has not resulted in any functional benefit. The Physical Therapy 3x4 Right Hand QTY: 12 are not medically necessary and appropriate.