

Case Number:	CM14-0152899		
Date Assigned:	09/23/2014	Date of Injury:	03/04/2014
Decision Date:	10/24/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/26/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/19/2014

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 Plastic Surgery/Hand Surgery and is licensed to practice in Oregon. 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 is a 55-year-old female who has a diagnosis of left carpal tunnel syndrome confirmed on nerve conduction testing. Splinting was not beneficial. Her symptoms have improved with a steroid injection but she continues to have a pressure type sensation in her fingers. Exam on 8/1/14 shows a mildly positive Tinel over the carpal tunnel syndrome.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

1 request for a left carpal tunnel release: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints.

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

Decision rationale: The carpal tunnel release is medically necessary. According to the ACOEM guidelines, Chapter 11, page 270, "Surgical decompression of the median nerve usually relieves CTS symptoms. High-quality scientific evidence shows success in the majority of patients with an electrodiagnostically confirmed diagnosis of CTS. Patients with the mildest symptoms display the poorest post-surgery results; patients with moderate or severe CTS have better outcomes from surgery than splinting. CTS must be proved by positive findings on clinical examination

and the diagnosis should be supported by nerve-conduction tests before surgery is undertaken." This patient has significant symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome, an exam consistent with carpal tunnel syndrome and positive electrodiagnostic studies for median nerve compression. Although she is improved with steroid injection, she continues to have pain in her fingers. Steroid injections allow temporary improvement only and are not curative for carpal tunnel syndrome. Per the ACOEM guidelines, carpal tunnel release is medically necessary.