

Case Number:	CM14-0164319		
Date Assigned:	10/09/2014	Date of Injury:	09/13/2012
Decision Date:	12/11/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/08/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/06/2014

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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 45-year-old female with a 9/13/12 date of injury and status post left carpal tunnel release on 2/27/14. At the time (7/21/14) of request for authorization for continue post-op physical therapy to the left wrist, there is documentation of subjective (left wrist/hand pain with stiffness, soreness, swelling, and loss of motion) and objective (decreased left wrist range of motion and coldness of the left hand) findings, current diagnoses (contracture of the left wrist/hand, complex regional pain syndrome of the left wrist/hand, and bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome status post left carpal tunnel release on 2/27/14), and treatment to date (at least 46 sessions of postoperative physical therapy). There is no documentation of remaining functional deficits that would be considered exceptional factors to justify exceeding guidelines; and 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 as a result of physical therapy provided to date.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Continue post-op physical therapy to the left wrist: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 15-16. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Physical therapy

Decision rationale: MTUS Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines identifies up to 8 visits of post-operative physical therapy over 5 weeks and post-surgical physical medicine treatment period of up to 3 months. In addition, MTUS postsurgical treatment Guidelines identifies that the initial course of physical therapy following surgery is 1/2 the number of sessions recommended for the general course of therapy for the specified surgery. 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 identifies that 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 contracture of the left wrist/hand, complex regional pain syndrome of the left wrist/hand, and bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome status post left carpal tunnel release. In addition, there is documentation of status post left carpal tunnel release on 2/27/14 and previous sessions of postoperative physical therapy. However, given documentation of at least 46 postoperative physical therapy sessions completed to date, which exceeds guidelines, there is no documentation of remaining functional deficits that would be considered exceptional factors to justify exceeding guidelines. In addition, there is no documentation 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 as a result of physical therapy provided to date. Furthermore, given documentation of a 2/27/14 date of surgery, post-surgical physical medicine treatment period exceeds guidelines. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for continue post-op physical therapy to the left wrist is not medically necessary.