

Case Number:	CM14-0167462		
Date Assigned:	10/14/2014	Date of Injury:	01/31/2008
Decision Date:	12/31/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/19/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/10/2014

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 Internal Medicine, has a subspecialty in HPM and is licensed to practice in Pennsylvania. 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:

The injured worker is a 62-year-old woman with a date of injury of 01/31/2008. The submitted and reviewed documentation did not identify the mechanism of injury. Treating physician notes dated 05/12/2014, 05/13/2014, 06/09/2014, 06/30/2014, 09/09/2014, and 09/10/2014 indicated the worker was experiencing right knee and ankle pain with worsening right foot and ankle swelling. Documented examinations described right foot tenderness, worsening foot and ankle swelling over several months, and a tender right foot nodule. The submitted and reviewed documentation concluded the worker was suffering from a left knee ganglion issue that was treated with surgery, a right deltoid ligament sprain, and complex regional pain syndrome causing right foot and ankle lymphedema. Treatment recommendations included a right ankle brace, physical therapy, right foot and ankle x-rays, a right foot and ankle MRI, and specialized lymphedema therapy. A Utilization Review decision was rendered on 09/22/2014 recommending non-certification for lymphedema therapy. A MRI imaging report dated 09/24/2014 was also reviewed.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Lymphedema therapy: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG),

Treatment Index, 12 Edition (web), 2014, Ankle and Foot Chapter, Lymphedema Pumps and Non-MTUS Work Loss Data Institute, Knee & Left (Acute & Chronic).

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Mohler ER, et al. Prevention and Treatment of Lymphedema, Topic 738, Version 22.0, UpToDate, 12/27/2014

Decision rationale: The MTUS Guidelines are silent on this issue in this clinical situation. Lymphedema is a difficult issue to treat, especially if it is not addressed in the early stages. If left untreated, lymphedema tends to gradually worsen over time and can eventually decrease function. Treatment with a non-pharmaceutical, multimodality regimen is best done in clinics that have specialty expertise in lymphedema. The goal of treatment is control of limb swelling, since usually the underlying condition cannot be corrected. Measurements of limb circumference and/or volume before, after, and sometimes during treatment are the common methods for monitoring improvement. The submitted and reviewed documentation concluded the worker was suffering from a sprained deltoid ankle ligament, complex regional pain syndrome causing right foot and ankle lymphedema, and a knee ganglion problem that was treated with surgery. These records demonstrate the swelling became slowly worse over approximately four months. Imaging ruled out other potentially reversible causes of swelling. For these reasons, this request is medically necessary.