

Case Number:	CM14-0174928		
Date Assigned:	10/28/2014	Date of Injury:	07/09/2002
Decision Date:	12/04/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/13/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/22/2014

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 Occupational 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:

Patient is a 59 year-old male with date of injury 07/09/2002. The medical document associated with the request for authorization, a primary treating physician's progress report, dated 09/25/2014, lists subjective complaints as bilateral hearing loss associated with noise exposure. The patient's current hearing aids are 3 years old and he reported some decrease in hearing sensitivity with them. Objective findings: Diagnostic audiologic evaluation was consistent with a bilateral mild to severe sensorineural hearing loss. Speech discrimination was fair in both ears. Impedance testing demonstrated normal middle ear function for both ears. Physician claims new hearing aid will elicit a 40-50% improvement in communication ability for the patient. Diagnosis: 1. Bilateral hearing loss.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

DME: Binaural Starkey 3 Series i110 RIC Hearing Aids: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, odg-twc.com. Sensorineural hearing loss, Mixed Hearing Loss

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Head (trauma, headaches, etc., not including stress & mental disorders), Hearing aids

Decision rationale: The Official Disability Guidelines recommend hearing aids for sensorineural hearing loss. However, hearing aids should be recommended by an otolaryngologist or a qualified audiologist, and prior authorization should be required for hearing aids costing more than \$1,500 per ear, including hearing aid evaluation, fitting and purchase of hearing aids, once every four years. According to the ODG, the patient will not be eligible for new hearing aids for another year. Also, the ODG states that prior authorization should be required prior to fitting the more expensive digital hearing aid. Binaural Starkey 3 Series i110 RIC Hearing Aids are not medically necessary.

Programming: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Head (trauma, headaches, etc., not including stress & mental disorders) Hearing aids

Decision rationale: According to the ODG, the patient will not be eligible for new hearing aids for another year. Programming is not medically necessary.

Batteries (x80): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Head (trauma, headaches, etc., not including stress & mental disorders) Hearing aids

Decision rationale: According to the ODG, the patient will not be eligible for new hearing aids for another year. Batteries (x80) is not medically necessary.