

Case Number:	CM14-0182767		
Date Assigned:	11/07/2014	Date of Injury:	12/18/2001
Decision Date:	12/11/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/22/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/03/2014

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 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:

The injured worker (IW) is a 70-year-old man with a date of injury of December 18, 2001. The mechanism of injury was not documented in the medical record. Pursuant to the progress report dated October 14, 2014, the IW has a long-standing history of bilateral hearing loss associated with noise exposure as a work related injury. The IW reports intermittent tinnitus in both ears, but denies any significant vertigo or previous history of middle ear surgery. Audiological evaluation revealed consistency with sensorineural hearing loss; severe to profound in the right ear and profound in the left ear. Speech discrimination is poor. The IW was fit with Bicos type amplification approximately 2 years ago. Hearing aid evaluation testing demonstrates that the injured worker's present amplification is malfunctioning and needs repair through the manufacturer. Program adjustments were made to aid with communication skills. The IW was diagnosed with sensorineural hearing loss, unspecified. The provider is requesting bilateral hearing aid repair with 1-year warranty for both ears. The IW was instructed to follow-up with periodic checks of hearing and hearing aids.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Bilateral hearing aid repair with 1 year warranty for both ears - purchase qty: 2: Upheld

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, 11th Edition (web), 2014, Head, Hearing Aids

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG); Head section, Hearing Aids

Decision rationale: Pursuant to the Official Disability Guidelines, bilateral hearing aid repair with one year warranty for both ears, purchase quantity #2 is not medically necessary. The guidelines indicate hearing aids should be recommended by an otolaryngologist qualified audiologist, and prior authorization should be required for hearing aids costing more than \$1500 per ear, including hearing aid evaluation, fitting and purchase of hearing aids once every four years. In this case, the worker is 70 years old. On October 1, 2013 he presented for an audiology evaluation regarding his hearing aids. Documentation showed the amplification was malfunctioning and hearing aids needed repair through the manufacturer. A request for authorization dated October 8, 2014 shows audiology evaluation, hearing aid evaluation and programming and 80 batteries were requested. On October 14, 2014 the injured worker presented for additional audiology evaluation, and hearing aid evaluation. The injured worker complains of tinnitus, but denied any significant vertigo or history of middle ear surgery. The diagnostic evaluation was consistent with sensorineural hearing loss, severe to profound in the right ear and profound in the left ear. There was no significant change in hearing sensitivity since the evaluation in October 2013 (one year prior). The amplification was malfunctioning and needed repair through the manufacturer a request was made for bilateral hearing aid repair with one year warranty for both ears-purchase the guidelines state hearing evaluation, fitting and purchase of hearing aids should be done once every four years. The clinical information in the medical record shows the injured worker was evaluated October 1, 2013 and one year later October 14, 2014 with no significant change in the injured worker's hearing thereby making the request unclear. There is nothing in the medical record indicating the injured worker claimed the hearing aids were not working. Additionally, there is no evidence the hearing aids were not previously repaired based on the progress note from October 1, 2013. And lastly, the injured worker was recently certified for 80 batteries for hearing aids. Again, it is unclear why batteries would have been requested if the hearing aid was malfunctioning or not working. Based on the clinical information in the medical record and other week or are you peer-reviewed evidence-based guidelines, bilateral hearing aid repair with one year warranty for both ears purchase quantity #2 are not medically necessary.