

Case Number:	CM14-0023935		
Date Assigned:	06/11/2014	Date of Injury:	01/05/2004
Decision Date:	07/18/2014	UR Denial Date:	01/29/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/25/2014

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 Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and is licensed to practice in Texas. 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 56-year-old who reported an injury on 1/5/04. The mechanism of injury was not provided for review. The injured worker sustained injuries to her neck, hips, shoulders, low back, right knee, and bilateral wrists and hands. The injured worker was evaluated on 7/16/13. It was documented that the injured worker had undergone an electrodiagnostic study on 2/23/13 that demonstrated the injured worker had bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome and bilateral C6-7 radiculopathy, consistent with double-crush syndrome. Physical findings included decreased sensation along the C6 distribution with a positive Phalen's sign. Evaluation of the left wrist documented a positive Phalen's sign with decreased sensation of the C6 nerve root distribution. The injured worker's diagnosis included lumbago, bilateral hip pain, cervicgia with upper extremity radiculopathy, bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome, cervical disc displacement, chronic pain syndrome, right shoulder pain, right plantar fasciitis, left knee pain with arthritis, and right shoulder impingement syndrome. The injured worker's treatment plan included bilateral carpal tunnel injections under ultrasound guidance. The injured worker was evaluated on 1/16/14. It was documented that the previously administered bilateral carpal tunnel injections provided a great deal of relief until just recently. It was documented that the injured worker had a return of symptoms to include numbness in the median nerve distribution of the bilateral hands with associated weakness. Physical findings of the bilateral hands included a positive Tinel's sign and positive Phalen's sign with decreased sensation in the C6 distribution. The injured worker's treatment plan included additional carpal tunnel injections under ultrasound guidance.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

BILATERAL CARPAL TUNNEL INJECTIONS UNDER ULTRASOUND GUIDANCE:
Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints Page(s): 264. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints Page(s): 270-271.

Decision rationale: The ACOEM guidelines recommend an initial corticosteroid injection for patients with mild to moderate cases of carpal tunnel syndrome. The clinical documentation supports that the injured worker has already received an initial course of corticosteroid injections to the carpal tunnel. The ACOEM does not recommend repeated or frequent injections of corticosteroid injections into the carpal tunnel. There are no exceptional factors noted within the documentation to support extending treatment beyond guideline recommendations. As such, the request is not medically necessary.