

Case Number:	CM14-0048417		
Date Assigned:	07/07/2014	Date of Injury:	05/12/2003
Decision Date:	08/26/2014	UR Denial Date:	04/01/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/16/2014

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:

The claimant was injured on 05/12/03. An H wave device purchase is under review. He has a diagnosis of nonunion of a lumbar fusion in 2007 and is status post revision surgery for a pseudoarthrosis on 01/21/14. He was given a bone stimulator postop. He previously used a TENS unit but it is not clear when or what condition was treated. H wave purchase was denied on 03/28/14. Following his original surgery, he had ongoing problems with pain control. He has had extensive medical treatment. He had a solid interbody fusion at L3-4 and L4-5 in June 2009 and the hardware was removed. [REDACTED] indicated on 02/05/14 that he had been using H wave throughout the day as it had been very beneficial for him. His medications included fentanyl, Percocet, trazodone, Valium, and omeprazole. He was in no acute distress and was stable. He was given a bone growth stimulator and was status post his revision surgery. He reportedly used an H wave unit from 01/31/14 through 02/26/14 for 26 days and he stated that it helped him more than other treatment. However, he was unable to decrease his medication. His pain level was 8/10 before use of the H wave and it improved his pain by 20%. He used it for 45 minutes. He also stated that it was much better than the TENS unit and really helped to control his pain. He had also been given fentanyl, Percocet, and Valium when the H wave was ordered. He is now status post a right total knee replacement. On 06/10/14, he was still on oxycodone and fentanyl and had a surgical wound in his right knee. Despite the use of the H wave unit, it appears that he continued to require pain medications including fentanyl. He has been described as stable with well healed incisions and intact neurovascular status. He has had some diffuse tenderness but was relatively benign and his range of motion was moderately decreased.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Home H-Wave Device purchase: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Home H-Wave Device Page(s): 117.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines H wave stimulation Page(s): 148.

Decision rationale: The California MTUS state H-wave stimulation (HWT) is not recommended as an isolated intervention, but a one-month home-based trial of H-Wave stimulation may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option for diabetic neuropathic pain (Julka, 1998) (Kumar, 1997) (Kumar, 1998), or chronic soft tissue inflammation if used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration, and only following failure of initially recommended conservative care, including recommended physical therapy (i.e., exercise) and medications, plus transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS). In this case, the claimant reported on several occasions that H wave helped him tremendously and the TENS did not. However, there is no evidence that he was able to decrease his use of medications and no objective measurable benefit or functional improvement has been documented on physical examination. He has continued to require significant pain medications, including opioids. As a result, the request for purchase of an H wave unit is not medically necessary.