

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0059950		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	07/09/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	11/19/2013
<b>Decision Date:</b>	08/28/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	03/28/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	04/30/2014

### 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:

This patient is a 61 y/o female who developed tinnitus symptoms after a door was slammed near her on 11/19/13. She has also developed tension related headaches and cervical muscle tightness. She has been evaluated by 2 ENT specialists and has specialty testing. The testing has revealed no nerve damage, speech discrimination of 96% and mild age related hearing loss. Cognitive therapy was recommended and improvement was expected over the next 12 months. Subsequent to the ENT evaluations she has been seen by an audiologist who recommended a Widex Zen hearing instrument as a source of "white noise".

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Widex zen hearing instrument, Bilateral:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Head Chapter, Hearing Aids.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence:

<http://www.mdguidelines.com/tinnitus><http://www.widex.com/en/hearing/hearing/tinnitus/widex-zen-therapy><http://www.ata.org/for-patients/treatment>.

**Decision rationale:** The California Medical Treatment Utilization Section (MTUS) Guidelines do not address this issue. But other guidelines suggest cognitive behavioral and/or relaxation therapy as the initial approach for the distress that may be associated with tinnitus. The Widex Zen hearing instrument is a hearing aid that provides a continuous soft background noise (white noise) in an attempt to mask the tinnitus. There was no literature found that supports the superiority of this product versus the treatment that was suggested by the ENT physician i.e. cognitive behavioral and/or relaxation therapy for tinnitus. Also, there were no studies that could be located that showed a superiority of the Widex hearing aids vs other methods of producing environmental white noise. The request for a Widex Zen hearing instrument, bilateral, is not medically necessary or appropriate.