

Case Number:	CM14-0081335		
Date Assigned:	10/02/2014	Date of Injury:	08/16/2012
Decision Date:	10/28/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/06/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/02/2014

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 & Rehabilitation 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 sustained an injury on 8/16/12. Request(s) under consideration include Physical Therapy x 12 sessions for the right ankle and left shoulder. Diagnoses included rotator cuff tear/left shoulder rotator cuff strain; right ankle peroneal tendonitis. MRI of left shoulder dated 11/26/13 had impression of "normal MRI of left shoulder." MRI of right ankle dated 11/26/13 showed "minimal sheath effusion; ankle inversion with mild lateral perimalleolar soft tissue edema; otherwise, normal MRI of right ankle." Report of 4/24/14 from the provider advised the patient had undergone therapy for right ankle and left shoulder with noted benefit. It was noted the patient had demonstrated plateau and regression in regards to symptoms; however, with continued chronic complaints of pain and weakness with overhead activities of left shoulder and worsening right ankle pain with prolonged weight bearing activities. Exam showed positive Neer's and Hawkin's impingement sign of left shoulder with flex/IR of 170 degrees and L4, 4/5 motor strength; right ankle with 5/5 strength in all planes excluding peroneus longus of 4/5. Treatment included continuing PT. The request(s) for Physical Therapy x 12 sessions for the right ankle and left shoulder was denied on 5/6/14 citing guidelines criteria and lack of medical necessity.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical Therapy x 12 sessions for the right ankle and left shoulder.: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Therapy Page(s): 98-99.

Decision rationale: Review indicated the patient having completed at least 12 PT sessions. Physical therapy is considered medically necessary when the services require the judgment, knowledge, and skills of a qualified physical therapist due to the complexity and sophistication of the therapy and the physical condition of the patient. However, there is no clear measurable evidence of progress with the PT treatment already rendered including milestones of increased ROM, strength, and functional capacity. Review of submitted physician reports show no evidence of functional benefit, unchanged chronic symptom complaints, clinical findings, and work status. There is no evidence documenting functional baseline with clear goals to be reached and the patient striving to reach those goals. The Chronic Pain Guidelines allow for 9-10 visits of physical therapy with fading of treatment to an independent self-directed home program. It appears the employee has received significant therapy sessions without demonstrated evidence of functional improvement to allow for additional therapy treatments. There is no report of acute flare-up, new injuries, or change in symptom or clinical findings to support for formal PT in a patient that has been instructed on a home exercise program for this chronic injury. Submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication to support further physical therapy when prior treatment rendered has not resulted in any functional benefit. The Physical Therapy x 12 sessions for the right ankle and left shoulder is not medically necessary and appropriate.