MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM14-0085081		
Date Assigned:	07/23/2014	Date of Injury:	02/14/2012
Decision Date:	09/22/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/28/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/06/2014

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, has a subspecialty in Pain 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 is a 49-year-old female with an original date of injury of February 14, 2012. The injured worker was employed at as a housekeeper at that time. The patient has upper extremity pains due to carpal tunnel syndrome, trigger finger that is status post release of the left index. The disputed requests is for massage therapy for the bilateral upper extremities for 6 sessions. A progress note on date of service may 15 2014 documents that the patient has increasing forearm pain. The patient states that she derives benefit from massage therapy and wishes to try more massage therapy for upper extremities.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

6 visits of massage therapy for left upper extremities: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Massage therapy Page(s): 59.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Massage Therapy Page(s): 60.

Decision rationale: The Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines on page 60 states the following regarding massage therapy:"Recommended as an option as indicated below. This treatment should be an adjunct to other recommended treatment (e.g. exercise), and it should be

limited to 4-6 visits in most cases. Scientific studies show contradictory results. Furthermore, many studies lack long-term follow-up. Massage is beneficial in attenuating diffuse musculoskeletal symptoms, but beneficial effects were registered only during treatment. Massage is a passive intervention and treatment dependence should be avoided."In the case of this injured worker, there is indication that the patient has previously had massage therapy as documented in a progress note on May 15, 2014. The guidelines specifically recommend only up to 6 visits in the majority of cases and emphasized that dependence should be avoided. Given the guidelines, this request is not medically necessary.

6 visits of massage therapy for right upper extremities: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Massage therapy Page(s): 59.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Massage Therapy Page(s): 60.

Decision rationale: The Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines on page 60 states the following regarding massage therapy:"Recommended as an option as indicated below. This treatment should be an adjunct to other recommended treatment (e.g. exercise), and it should be limited to 4-6 visits in most cases. Scientific studies show contradictory results. Furthermore, many studies lack long-term follow-up. Massage is beneficial in attenuating diffuse musculoskeletal symptoms, but beneficial effects were registered only during treatment. Massage is a passive intervention and treatment dependence should be avoided."In the case of this injured worker, there is indication that the patient has previously had massage therapy as documented in a progress note on May 15, 2014. The guidelines specifically recommend only up to 6 visits in the majority of cases and emphasized that dependence should be avoided. Given the guidelines, this request is not medically necessary.