

Case Number:	CM14-0095333		
Date Assigned:	09/22/2014	Date of Injury:	02/14/2014
Decision Date:	11/24/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/09/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/13/2014

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 Anesthesiology, 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 56-year-old male with a 2/14/14 date of injury. At the time (4/8/14) of request for authorization for Physical Therapy twice weekly for 6 weeks to the Cervical Spine and Right Shoulder, there is documentation of subjective (neck and right shoulder pain) and objective (limited range of motion of the cervical spine, positive Spurling's and foraminal compression tests, and limited range of motion of the right shoulder) findings, current diagnoses (cervical disc disease, right shoulder rotator cuff syndrome, and cervical strain/sprain), and treatment to date (medications).

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical Therapy Twice weekly For 6 weeks to the Cervical Spine and Right Shoulder:
Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 98-99, 111-113.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Neck & Upper Back and Shoulder, Physical Therapy

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines support a brief course of physical medicine for patients with chronic pain not to exceed 10 visits over 4-8 weeks with allowance for fading of treatment frequency, with transition to an active self-directed program of independent home physical medicine/therapeutic exercise. ODG recommends a limited course of physical therapy for patients with a diagnosis of cervical sprain/strain not to exceed 10 visits over 8 weeks, and diagnosis of rotator cuff syndrome not to exceed 10 visits over 8 weeks. ODG also notes patients should be formally assessed after a "six-visit clinical trial" to see if the patient is moving in a positive direction, no direction, or a negative direction (prior to continuing with the physical therapy) and when treatment requests exceeds guideline recommendations, the physician must provide a statement of exceptional factors to justify going outside of guideline parameters. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of cervical disc disease, right shoulder rotator cuff syndrome, and cervical strain/sprain. In addition, given documentation of subjective (neck and right shoulder pain) and objective (limited range of motion of the cervical spine, positive Spurling's and foraminal compression tests, and limited range of motion of the right shoulder) findings, there is documentation of functional deficits and functional goals. However, the requested Physical Therapy 2x6 Cervical Spine and Right Shoulder exceed guidelines (for an initial trial). Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Physical Therapy Twice weekly For 6 weeks to the Cervical Spine and Right Shoulder is not medically necessary.