

Case Number:	CM14-0123623		
Date Assigned:	08/08/2014	Date of Injury:	04/26/2013
Decision Date:	03/10/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/28/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/05/2014

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. 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/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:

State(s) of Licensure: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Pain Management

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 is a 56 year old male who suffered a work related injury on 04/26/2013. He suffered injuries to his low back and right shoulder while lifting a piece of metal. Diagnoses include sprain/strain of the neck, sprain/strain of the shoulder and arm, and shoulder disorders with bursae and tendons. Treatment has included medications, psychotherapy, acupuncture, and aqua therapy. The injured worker is temporarily totally disabled. A physician progress note dated 7/26/2014 from a face to face visit on 7/16/2014 documents the injured worker has had a positive response in regard to the aqua therapy. He still has problems with radicular component related to the lumbar spine, although the aqua therapy sessions do help. Group Psychotherapy with cognitive behavioral therapy and relaxing technique is also showing a good response. It is also documented the injured worker has ongoing low back, right shoulder and arm complaints with stiffness and weakness. There is restrictive lumbar range of motion, with pain at end points. The request is for Aqua therapy 2 times 5 weeks for the cervical, lumbar spine and left shoulder. Utilization Review done 10/22/2014 non-certified the request for aqua therapy 2 times 5 weeks citing California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) Guidelines, Aquatic Therapy would not be indicated. The injured worker has undergone 12 previous treatments. Records reviewed show no evidence on physical examination of any acute indication as to why the injured worker would have to be continued on more aquatic therapy. There is lack of documentation in regards to the injured worker's response to initial therapy as well. The injured worker would be a candidate for advancement to a home exercise program.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

10 aquatic therapy sessions, 2x/week for 5 weeks, cervical spine, lumbar spine, left shoulder: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aquatic therapy Page(s): 22.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aquatic Therapy, Physical Medicine Page(s): 22, 99.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for aquatic therapy, the Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines specify that this is an alternative to land-based physical therapy in cases where reduced weight bearing is desirable, such as in extreme obesity. The medical records indicate that the patient has had previous aquatic therapy. However, there is no comprehensive summary of the functional benefit of such aquatic therapy. The physical medicine guidelines of the MTUS specified that future therapy is contingent on demonstration of functional benefit from prior therapy. Therefore, this request is not medically necessary.