

Case Number:	CM14-0124208		
Date Assigned:	08/08/2014	Date of Injury:	08/25/2010
Decision Date:	02/13/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/17/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/06/2014

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 Rehab, 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:

This is a patient with a date of injury of August 25, 2010. A utilization review determination dated July 17, 2014 recommends noncertification of physical therapy for the left elbow and wrist x12 sessions. Noncertification is recommended due to lack of documentation of specific goals for physical therapy and a legible physical examination. A progress report dated June 9, 2014 identifies subjective complaints which are largely illegible but seem to indicate something is going on with the left elbow/wrist and right elbow/wrist. Physical examination findings reveal tenderness in the left elbow and decreased sensation in the left median nerve distribution with positive Tinel's and Phalen's tests. Diagnoses include elbow sprain/strain, cervical spine sprain/strain, insomnia, left elbow medial/lateral epicondylitis, and left carpal tunnel syndrome. The treatment plan recommends physical therapy.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical Therapy for Let Elbow- 2 Times a Week - 12 Sessions Total: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 91,98-99. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints Page(s): 265. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Chapter, Physical Therapy.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for physical therapy, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines recommend a short course of active therapy with continuation of active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement levels. ODG has more specific criteria for the ongoing use of physical therapy. ODG recommends a trial of physical therapy. If the trial of physical therapy results in objective functional improvement, as well as ongoing objective treatment goals, then additional therapy may be considered. Within the documentation available for review, there is no indication of any specific objective treatment goals and no statement indicating why an independent program of home exercise would be insufficient to address any objective deficits. Furthermore, the request exceeds the amount of PT recommended as a trial by the CA MTUS and, unfortunately, there is no provision for modification of the current request. In the absence of such documentation, the current request for physical therapy is not medically necessary.