MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM14-0186840		
Date Assigned:	11/14/2014	Date of Injury:	01/27/2014
Decision Date:	01/05/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/22/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/10/2014

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 and Rehabilitation, has a subspecialty in Neuromuscular Medicine and is licensed to practice in Maryland. 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 patient is a 44-year-old male who had a work injury on 1/27/14 when he fell off a scaffolding. His diagnosis includes a C4 spinal cord injury, ASIA-D, and status post-surgery. Under consideration is a request for 12 weeks of home health assistant for 8-12 hours per day. On 01/31/14, he had C4-C6 ACDF and C3-T1 posterior decompression. It was deemed in April 2014 that he was able to function at ASIA-D upon discharge from an acute rehabilitation program. The 08/31/14 report indicates he had difficulties in ambulation and transferring. He receives assistance from relatives, friends, neighbors, and paid help. The patient has a power wheelchair, a walker, and a tub chair. Per documentation on 09/16/14 he had neck pain. There were troubles with concentration and memory. The patient has had a history of multiple episodes of deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism. He was in need of assistance for dressing, bathing, toileting, bed mobility, transfers, eating, and grooming. He was on a power wheelchair. He was non-ambulatory. Upon examination there was right foot edema, full ROMs, right-sided strength of 1/5 to 4/5, and bilateral S1 sensory deficit. There was a document dated 9/23/14 letter that states that he needs 12 hours of care for days when he has appointments and other needs the caregiver provides. The specific duties to be performed by the requested home health assistant were not explicitly stated. Based on the above cited points, the medical necessity of this request cannot be validated at this time.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

12 Weeks of Home Health Assistant (8 to 12 hours/day): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Home health services Page(s): 51.

Decision rationale: The 12 Weeks of Home Health Assistant (8 to 12 hours/day) is not medically necessary per the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines. The guidelines state that home health services are recommended only for otherwise recommended medical treatment for patients who are homebound, on a part-time or intermittent basis, generally up to no more than 35 hours per week. Medical treatment does not include homemaker services like shopping, cleaning, and laundry, and personal care given by home health aides like bathing, dressing, and using the bathroom when this is the only care needed. The documentation is not clear on the amount of time home health was utilized on a daily basis or the specific tasks that the home health assistant was performing. The documentation does not reveal extenuating circumstances that require over 35 hours per week. The request for 12 Weeks of Home Health Assistant (8 to 12 hours/day) is not medically necessary.