

Case Number:	CM14-0194340		
Date Assigned:	12/02/2014	Date of Injury:	08/18/2014
Decision Date:	01/20/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/03/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/20/2014

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 Occupational 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 applicant is a represented [REDACTED] employee who has filed a claim for foot and ankle pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of August 18, 2014. In a Utilization Review Report dated November 3, 2014, the claims administrator failed to approve requests for MRI imaging of the foot and ankle without contrast. The claims administrator stated that its decision was based on an October 27, 2014 progress note and an associated RFA form. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. In an August 18, 2014 DFR, the applicant presented with a fractured right toe following a crush injury to the foot. In a handwritten Doctor's First Report (DFR) dated October 27, 2014, the applicant was placed off of work, on total temporary disability. The applicant was given diagnoses of fractured foot and toes per history, sprain and strain of knee, and arthrofibrosis of right ankle. The note was handwritten and difficult to follow. The applicant was placed off of work. X-rays of the foot and ankle as well as MRI imaging of the right knee, right foot, and right ankle were sought. Little in the way of narrative rationale or narrative commentary was attached.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) of the right foot without contrast and MRI of the right ankle without contrast: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 14 Ankle and Foot Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Ankle & Foot (updated 10/29/14)

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 14 Ankle and Foot Complaints Page(s): 374.

Decision rationale: While the MTUS Guideline in ACOEM Chapter 14, page 374 does acknowledge that MRI imaging of the foot and/or ankle may be helpful to clarify a diagnosis of delayed recovery such as osteochondritis dissecans, in this case, however, the request for MRI imaging was initiated on October 27, 2014, i.e., some two months removed from the date the applicant had sustained a fracture of one or more toes. It was not clear why MRI imaging was being sought. The attending provider's handwritten October 27, 2014 DFR did not outline a clear or compelling rationale for pursuit of MRI imaging of the foot and ankle. It was not clear why MRI imaging was sought in conjunction with separately sought x-rays of the foot and ankle. Again, the diagnosis in question, that of phalangeal fractures of the foot, had seemingly been previously established through an earlier treating provider and through earlier plain film x-rays. It was not clear why MRI imaging of the foot and/or ankle was sought approximately two months removed from the date the applicant had previously been diagnosed with fractures of the toes. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.