

Case Number:	CM14-0197669		
Date Assigned:	12/03/2014	Date of Injury:	08/15/2013
Decision Date:	01/23/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/21/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/25/2014

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 Emergency Medicine, and is licensed to practice in New York. 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 52-year-old male who was injured on August 15, 2013. The patient continued to experience pain in his right shoulder and low back. Physical examination was notable for decreased range of motion of the right shoulder, normal motor strength, and intact sensation. Diagnoses included right shoulder strain, right shoulder impingement syndrome, status postoperative right shoulder subacromial decompression postoperative adhesive capsulitis, lumbosacral strain, and herniated degenerative lumbar disc. Treatment included medications, physical therapy, and surgery. Requests for authorization for physical therapy evaluation of right shoulder and lumbar spine and physical therapy treatments of the right shoulder and lumbar spine were submitted for consideration.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical Therapy evaluation, for the lumbar spine and right shoulder, per 8/20/14 Rx, quantity 1.00: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 99.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 98-99.

Decision rationale: Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that there is no high-grade scientific evidence to support the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of passive physical modalities such as traction, heat/cold applications, massage, diathermy, TENS units, ultrasound, laser treatment, or biofeedback. They can provide short-term relief during the early phases of treatment. Active treatment is associated with better outcomes and can be managed as a home exercise program with supervision. ODG states that physical therapy is more effective in short-term follow up. 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). When treatment duration and/or number of visits exceed the guideline, exceptional factors should be noted. Recommended number of visits for myalgia and myositis is 9-10 visits over 8 weeks; and for neuralgia, neuritis, and radiculitis is 8-10 visits over 4 weeks. In this case the requested visit is in addition to 12 visits requested for treatment. The total requested number of visits is 13. This surpasses the recommended number six for clinical trial. In addition physical therapy has not been effective for treatment of the patient in the past. The request is not medically necessary.

Physical Therapy 3 times weekly, for the lumbar spine and right shoulder, per 8/20/14 Rx, quantity 12.00: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 99.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 98-99.

Decision rationale: Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that there is no high-grade scientific evidence to support the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of passive physical modalities such as traction, heat/cold applications, massage, diathermy, TENS units, ultrasound, laser treatment, or biofeedback. They can provide short-term relief during the early phases of treatment. Active treatment is associated with better outcomes and can be managed as a home exercise program with supervision. ODG states that physical therapy is more effective in short-term follow up. 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). When treatment duration and/or number of visits exceed the guideline, exceptional factors should be noted. Recommended number of visits for myalgia and myositis is 9-10 visits over 8 weeks; and for neuralgia, neuritis, and radiculitis is 8-10 visits over 4 weeks. In this case the requested number of 12 visits surpasses the recommended number six for clinical trial. In addition physical therapy has not been effective for treatment of the patient in the past. The request is not medically necessary.