

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0197747		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	12/08/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	03/27/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	01/16/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	10/28/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	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 Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation 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 39 year-old patient sustained an injury on 3/27/12 while employed by [REDACTED]. Request(s) under consideration include physical therapy (PT); 18 sessions (3x6). Diagnoses include Left lateral epicondylitis. Conservative care has included medications, therapy, splinting, elbow injection, and modified activities/rest. Report of 10/7/14 from the provider noted the patient with chronic ongoing elbow pain rated at 5/10 radiating into the forearm with associated stabbing sensation and swelling; constant headaches with difficulty sleeping. Exam showed decreased left grip strength; previous 2 injections to the lateral epicondyle provided temporary relief; left shoulder with tenderness to palpation and positive impingement. Treatment included continued medications, PT and transportation to appointments. The request(s) for Physical therapy; 18 sessions (3x6) was non-certified on 10/28/14 citing guidelines criteria and lack of medical necessity.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Physical therapy; 18 sessions (3x6): Upheld**

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

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Therapy Page(s): 98-99.

**Decision rationale:** This 39 year-old patient sustained an injury on 3/27/12 while employed by [REDACTED]. Request(s) under consideration include physical therapy; 18 sessions (3x6). Diagnoses include Left lateral epicondylitis. Conservative care has included medications, therapy, splinting, elbow injection, and modified activities/rest. Report of 10/7/14 from the provider noted the patient with chronic ongoing elbow pain rated at 5/10 radiating into the forearm with associated stabbing sensation and swelling; constant headaches with difficulty sleeping. Exam showed decreased left grip strength; previous 2 injections to the lateral epicondyle provided temporary relief; left shoulder with tenderness to palpation and positive impingement. Treatment included continued medications, PT and transportation to appointments. The request(s) for Physical therapy; 18 sessions (3x6) was non-certified on 10/28/14. Physical therapy is considered medically necessary when the services require the judgment, knowledge, and skills of a qualified physical therapist due to the complexity and sophistication of the therapy and the physical condition of the patient. However, there is no clear measurable evidence of progress with the PT treatment already rendered including milestones of increased range of motion (ROM), strength, and functional capacity. Review of submitted physician reports show no evidence of functional benefit, unchanged chronic symptom complaints, clinical findings, and functional status. There is no evidence documenting functional baseline with clear goals to be reached and the patient striving to reach those goals. The Chronic Pain Guidelines allow for visits of physical therapy with fading of treatment to an independent self-directed home program. It appears the employee has received significant therapy sessions without demonstrated evidence of functional improvement to allow for additional therapy treatments. There is no report of acute flare-up, new injuries, or change in symptom or clinical findings to support for formal PT in a patient that has been instructed on a home exercise program for this chronic injury. Submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication to support further physical therapy when prior treatment rendered has not resulted in any functional benefit. The physical therapy; 18 sessions (3x6) is not medically necessary and appropriate.