

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0211433		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	12/24/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	06/13/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	02/17/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	11/19/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	12/16/2014

### 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, 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:

his patient sustained an injury on 6/13/12 while employed by [REDACTED]. Request(s) under consideration include PT 2xwk 4-6wks, continuation of present program aquatic/gym. Diagnoses include Ankylosing Vertebral Hyperostosis; lumbar spinal stenosis without neurogenic claudication. Conservative care has included medications, therapy modalities, and modified activities/rest. The patient continues to treat for chronic ongoing symptom complaints. Report from the provider noted continued symptoms with unchanged clinical status. It was noted the patient had recently completed an additional 12 PT sessions and continues to work out in an independent gym. Follow-up on 11/26/14 noted patient was doing well s/p surgery on 8/26/14 and should continue PT for endurance and strengthening with 3 session left and was eager to return to work. The patient noted sleep was better and he has discontinued Nortriptyline. Diagnoses list lumbar radiculopathy/ intervertebral disc displacement without myelopathy; lateral epicondylitis; and idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis. The patient remained TTD status. The request(s) for PT 2xwk 4-6wks, continuation of present program aquatic/gym was non-certified on 11/19/14 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:

**Associated surgical service: PT 2xwk 4-6wks, continuation of present program aquatic/gym.: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints,Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines,Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines.

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

**Decision rationale:** 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 ROM, strength, and functional capacity. Review of submitted physician reports show no evidence of functional benefit, unchanged chronic symptom complaints, clinical findings, and work 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 9-10 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 PT 2xwk 4-6wks, continuation of present program aquatic/gym is not medically necessary and appropriate.