

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0009607		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	01/27/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/07/2014
<b>Decision Date:</b>	03/16/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	12/24/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	01/16/2015

### 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. 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/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:  
State(s) of Licensure: California  
Certification(s)/Specialty: Psychologist

### 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 36 year old male sustained an industrial injury on 4/7/14. As the result of a fall, he injured his face, low back and bilateral upper extremities. He subsequently reports multiple areas of continued pain. Diagnoses include right and left shoulder muscle strain. Prior treatments include physical therapy and pain medications. The UR decision dated 12/24/14 partially-certified 6 Sessions of Biofeedback - Modified to 4 Sessions of Biofeedback. The decision to partially-certify 6 Sessions of Biofeedback was based on California Chronic Pain Medical Treatment guidelines and ODG biofeedback therapy guidelines.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Six sessions of biofeedback:** Overturned

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Mental Illness & Stress

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Part 2, behavioral interventions, biofeedback Page(s): 24-25.

**Decision rationale:** Citation According to the MTUS treatment guidelines for biofeedback it is not recommended as a stand-alone treatment but is recommended as an option within a cognitive behavioral therapy program to facilitate exercise therapy and returned to activity. A biofeedback referral in conjunction with cognitive behavioral therapy after four weeks can be considered. An initial trial of 3 to 4 psychotherapy visits over two weeks is recommended at first and if there is evidence of objective functional improvement a total of up to 6 to 10 visits over a 5 to 6 week period of individual sessions may be offered. After completion of the initial trial of treatment and if medically necessary the additional sessions up to 10 maximum, the patient may "continue biofeedback exercises at home" independently. Decision: This 36-year-old male fell 14 feet from a roof onto a floor; hitting his face, shoulders, hands and injured multiple parts of his body. According to a treatment progress note from the patient's primary treating psychologist from December 15, 2014 the patient has had 6 sessions of cognitive behavioral therapy and completed monthly tests and there is a notation that anxiety has been decreased somewhat from 36 severe to 32 severe and depression increased from 22 moderate to 27 moderate. Symptoms of PTSD also were noted to have increased and pain catastrophize and decreased considerably from 42 to 24. Patient reports feeling better overall and was unable to account for the increased discourse and depression or PTSD symptoms. Overall anxiety is reported as decreased. Treatment recommendations is to continue with biofeedback based breathing and continue with pain management exercises, socialization and practicing calming techniques. A request was made for 6 sessions of psychotherapy and 6 sessions of biofeedback. The request for the biofeedback sessions was modified by utilization review to allow for 4 sessions of biofeedback bringing the total quantity to 10 sessions which is consistent with the above mentioned biofeedback MTUS guidelines as the maximum. Although the utilization review determination for modification to reduce the number of requested sessions from 6 sessions downward to 4 sessions so that it would conform to the MTUS guidelines is accurate in its determination, there are occasions where an allowance and flexibility can be allowed. Medical records reflect that this is such a case. The reason being that the injury is relatively new and he is just starting his first psychological treatment. The patient appears to be making very good progress with his treatment. Although several indices reflected increased symptomology such as the depression and PTSD indices this is very common in psychological treatment where there is initially a worsening of symptoms as they are worked on and discussed. Given the severity of his injury and the fact that he is new to psychological treatment most similar patients would typically require a little bit of additional treatment. The MTUS guidelines for general for psychotherapy only allow for 10 sessions maximum whereas the official disability guidelines allow for 13-20 sessions for most patients with an additional mention of certain circumstances were additional treatment up to a total of 50 sessions can be authorized with cases of severe major depression and PTSD. There is no official disability guidelines equivalent for biofeedback As it is not addressed in the official disability guidelines. Allowing this patient to have some extra biofeedback treatment is reasonable and appropriate and based on the medical records are provided appears to be medically necessary. Therefore the utilization review determination is overturned to allow for 6 sessions of biofeedback.