

Case Number:	CM15-0141275		
Date Assigned:	07/31/2015	Date of Injury:	11/19/2014
Decision Date:	09/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/09/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/21/2015

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: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Pain Management

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 is a 26-year-old female with a November 19, 2014 date of injury. A progress note dated May 18, 2015 documents subjective complaints (neck and back pain is improved 25% with completion of initial trial of therapy; increased tolerance for sitting, driving, standing, and performing basic activities of daily living; intermittent daily headaches persist), objective findings (tenderness to palpation of levator scapula and upper trapezius and lumbar paravertebral musculature; tenderness to palpation and muscular guarding of upper dorsal and mid thoracic paravertebral musculature), and current diagnoses (intervertebral cervical disc disorder; lumbar sprain and strain; thoracic sprain and strain). Treatments to date have included magnetic resonance imaging of the cervical spine (April 6, 2015; showed minimal multilevel cervical spondylosis), chiropractic treatments, and medications. The treating physician documented a plan of care that included twelve sessions of physical therapy for the cervical, thoracic, and lumbar spine.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

12 physical therapy sessions, 3xWk for 4 Weeks, cervical spine, thoracic spine, lumbar spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98-99.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines 8 C.C.R. 9792.20 & 9792.26 MTUS (Effective July 18, 2009) Page(s): 98-99 of 127. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Neck and Low Back Chapters, Physical Medicine.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for physical therapy, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines recommend a short course (10 sessions) of active therapy with continuation of active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement levels. ODG has more specific criteria for the ongoing use of physical therapy. ODG recommends a trial of physical therapy. If the trial of physical therapy results in objective functional improvement, as well as ongoing objective treatment goals, then additional therapy may be considered. Within the documentation available for review, there is no documentation of specific objective functional improvement with any previous sessions and remaining deficits that cannot be addressed within the context of an independent home exercise program, yet are expected to improve with formal supervised therapy. Furthermore, the request exceeds the amount of PT recommended by the CA MTUS and, unfortunately, there is no provision for modification of the current request. In light of the above issues, the currently requested physical therapy is not medically necessary.