

Case Number:	CM15-0142575		
Date Assigned:	08/03/2015	Date of Injury:	06/30/2014
Decision Date:	08/31/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/15/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/22/2015

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: Texas, Florida, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine

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 injured worker is a 42 year old male patient who sustained an industrial injury on June 30, 2014. A recent primary treating office visit dated Jul 06, 2015 reported the patient with subjective complaint of intermittent to moderate throbbing left ankle pain and weakness aggravated by prolonged walking and standing. He is status post an open reduction with internal fixation on July 18, 2014. The following diagnoses were applied: left ankle pain; left ankle strain and sprain, and status post-surgery, left ankle. The plan of care noted the patient is recommended to participate in a course of physical therapy attempting to decrease pain, spasms and increase the range of motion to the ankle. The patient is to remain off from work duty through August 20, 2015.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical Therapy once a week for six weeks for the left ankle: 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 Page(s): 98 of 127.

Decision rationale: This claimant was injured over a year ago. As of July 2015, there is left ankle pain and weakness. He is status post an open reduction with internal fixation in July of 2014. The frequency and duration, and objective functional improvement out of past therapies are unknown. He had diagnoses of left ankle pain; left ankle strain and sprain, and status post-surgery, left ankle. The MTUS does permit physical therapy in chronic situations, noting that one should allow for fading of treatment frequency (from up to 3 visits per week to 1 or less), plus active self-directed home Physical Medicine. The conditions mentioned are Myalgia and myositis, unspecified (ICD9 729.1): 9-10 visits over 8 weeks; Neuralgia, neuritis, and radiculitis, unspecified (ICD9 729.2) 8-10 visits over 4 weeks; and Reflex sympathetic dystrophy (CRPS) (ICD9 337.2): 24 visits over 16 weeks. This claimant does not have these conditions. And, after several documented sessions of therapy, it is not clear why the patient would not be independent with self-care at this point. Also, there are especially strong caveats in the MTUS/ACOEM guidelines against over treatment in the chronic situation supporting the clinical notion that the move to independence and an active, independent home program is clinically in the best interest of the patient. They cite: "Although mistreating or under treating pain is of concern, an even greater risk for the physician is over treating the chronic pain patient." Over treatment often results in irreparable harm to the patient's socioeconomic status, home life, personal relationships, and quality of life in general. A patient's complaints of pain should be acknowledged. Patient and clinician should remain focused on the ultimate goal of rehabilitation leading to optimal functional recovery, decreased healthcare utilization, and maximal self actualization. This request for more skilled, monitored therapy was appropriately not medically necessary.