

Case Number:	CM15-0145016		
Date Assigned:	08/05/2015	Date of Injury:	06/03/2014
Decision Date:	09/09/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/29/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/27/2015

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, Texas, Florida

Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, Pain Management, Hospice & Palliative 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 43 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 6-3-2014. The mechanism of injury is unknown. The injured worker was diagnosed as having right elbow lateral epicondylitis status post-surgery. There is no record of a recent diagnostic study. Treatment to date has included surgery, physical therapy and medication management. In a progress note dated 6-9-2015, the injured worker complains of right elbow pain rated 7 out of 10-with pain that showed improvement. Physical examination showed elbow tenderness and decreased range of motion. The treating physician is requesting Physical therapy twice weekly for 6 weeks for the right elbow.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical therapy 2xwk x 6wks Right elbow: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 17.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Elbow Chapter, Physical Therapy.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for Physical therapy 2xwk x 6wks Right elbow, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines recommend a short course 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 documentation of completion of prior PT sessions, but there is no documentation of 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 2xwk x 6wks Right elbow is not medically necessary.