

Case Number:	CM15-0145634		
Date Assigned:	08/07/2015	Date of Injury:	12/01/2014
Decision Date:	09/10/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/16/2015
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: Texas, New York, 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 applicant is a represented 54-year-old who has filed a claim for chronic knee, hip, and groin pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of December 1, 2014. In a utilization review report dated July 16, 2015, the claims administrator failed to approve a request for six sessions of physical therapy for the hip. An RFA form received on July 10, 2015 was referenced in the determination, along with progress notes of May 14, 2015, June 8, 2015, and July 8, 2015. The claims administrator contended that the applicant had completed at least 13 sessions of physical therapy. The claims administrator contended, somewhat circuitously, that it was not altogether clear that the applicant in fact had a job to return to. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On July 8, 2015, the applicant's treating provider acknowledged that the applicant was not, in fact, working. 1/10 hip pain complaints were reported. The applicant was on Tramadol and Pamelor, it was reported. The applicant had received approximately 13 sessions of physical therapy, the treating provider reported. The applicant exhibited an antalgic gait but was able to ambulate without the aid of a cane, it was suggested. Somewhat painful hip range of motion was reported. The applicant was given a rather proscriptive 10-pound lifting limitation, seemingly resulting in the applicant's removal from the workplace. The treating provider stated that the applicant's employer was unwilling to allow her to return to work with restrictions in place. The treating provider did not explicitly state whether the applicant in fact had a job to return to but suggested that the applicant had sustained a hip fracture status post surgical fixation on December 4, 2014, had issues with iliotibial band syndrome, a knee strain, and derivative complaints of gait disturbance.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Work conditioning to the left hip 2 times a week for 3 weeks: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Work Conditioning, Work Hardening Page(s): 125-126.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Work conditioning, work hardening Page(s): 125.

Decision rationale: No, the request for work conditioning was not medically necessary, medically appropriate, or indicated here. As noted on page 125 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, one of the cardinal criteria for pursuit of a work hardening or work conditioning program is evidence that an applicant has a defined return to work goal agreed upon by the employer and employee, with a documented specific job to return to with job demands which exceed abilities. Here, however, the attending provider's progress note of July 8, 2015 was difficult to follow, was somewhat circuitous in its rationale, and did not explicitly state whether the applicant in fact had a job to return to as of the date of the request, July 8, 2015, i.e., some eight months removed from the date of injury, December 1, 2014. It was not clearly stated whether the applicant had a job to return to as of this relatively late stage in the course of the claim. Therefore, the request was not medically necessary.