

Case Number:	CM15-0160547		
Date Assigned:	08/26/2015	Date of Injury:	09/06/2013
Decision Date:	09/29/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/31/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/17/2015

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:

The injured worker is a 44 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 9-6-13. The injured worker was diagnosed as having cervical musculoligamentous strain or sprain with radiculitis, rule out cervical spine discogenic disease, thoracic musculoligamentous strain or sprain, lumbosacral spine discogenic disease, right shoulder strain or sprain, right rotator cuff tear, and infraspinatus or supraspinatus tendinosis with acromioclavicular joint osteoarthritis. Treatment to date has included physical therapy. Physical examination findings on 3-26-15 included tenderness to palpation over the cervical paraspinal muscles with palpable spasm. A cervical compression test was positive and trigger points were noted. Currently, the injured worker complains of right sided neck pain. The treating physician requested authorization for retrospective physical therapy for the cervical spine x12.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Retrospective 12 physical therapy 2 times a week for 6 weeks for the cervical spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98-99. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Neck & Upper Back Chapter, Physical Therapy.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for additional physical therapy, 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 32 PT sessions, but there is no documentation of specific objective functional improvement with the 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 additional physical therapy is not medically necessary.