

Case Number:	CM15-0163838		
Date Assigned:	09/01/2015	Date of Injury:	06/17/2014
Decision Date:	09/30/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/03/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/20/2015

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: New York, Tennessee
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Emergency 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 61 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 6-17-14. He had left shoulder and right hip pain. He was diagnosed with a right hip fracture. Treatments include: medication, physical therapy. Progress report dated 7-24-15 reports continued complaints of left shoulder pain, rated 7 out of 10. The pain is aggravated by reaching with the left shoulder reaching activities. He is doing a home exercise program and taking Tramadol. Diagnoses: left shoulder adhesive capsulitis. Plan of care includes: request 12 additional physical therapy sessions and follow up in 3 weeks. Work status: work with restrictions of no lifting over 10 pounds and no overhead work with his left upper extremity.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical therapy for the left shoulder 2 times a week for 6 weeks: 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 Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 98-99.

Decision rationale: Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that there is no high-grade scientific evidence to support the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of passive physical modalities such as traction, heat/cold applications, massage, diathermy, TENS units, ultrasound, laser treatment, or biofeedback. They can provide short-term relief during the early phases of treatment. Active treatment is associated with better outcomes and can be managed as a home exercise program with supervision. ODG states that physical therapy is more effective in short-term follow up. Patients should be formally assessed after a "six-visit clinical trial" to see if the patient is moving in a positive direction, no direction, or a negative direction (prior to continuing with the physical therapy). When treatment duration and/or number of visits exceed the guideline, exceptional factors should be noted. Recommended number of visits for myalgia and myositis is 9-10 visits over 8 weeks; and for neuralgia, neuritis, and radiculitis is 8-10 visits over 4 weeks. In this case the patient has had six physical therapy visits, but has not shown any objective evidence of functional improvement. In addition the requested additional 12 visits would bring the total to 18 visits, surpassing the recommended maximum number of visits. The request is not medically necessary.