

Case Number:	CM15-0165682		
Date Assigned:	09/03/2015	Date of Injury:	03/04/2015
Decision Date:	10/06/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/14/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/24/2015

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: Massachusetts

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 57 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on March 4, 2015, incurring left ankle injuries. She was diagnosed with a left ankle fibula fracture and left ankle ligament disruption. Treatment included physical therapy, bracing, pain medications, anti-inflammatory drugs, and work restrictions. Currently, the injured worker complained of persistent pain and tenderness in her left ankle. She noted limited movement with sharp pain and felt the ankle was giving out on her. There was some swelling noted in the left ankle. The treatment plan that was requested for authorization included twelve physical therapy visits to the left ankle.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

12 Physical therapy visits (left ankle): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 14 Ankle and Foot Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Ankle & Foot (Acute & Chronic) Physical therapy.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Ankle & Foot (Acute & Chronic), physical therapy.

Decision rationale: The claimant sustained a left fibular fracture with anterior talofibular ligament disruption in March 2015 when she stepped in a hole and lost her balance. As of 04/24/15 she had completed 12 physical therapy treatment sessions. She was placed in a lace up ankle brace and 12 additional physical therapy treatments were requested. When seen on 07/23/15 she was having ongoing pain and was continuing to wear the ankle brace. There had been improvement with physical therapy treatments. Physical examination findings included lateral swelling and tenderness. An x-ray was obtained confirming that the fracture had healed. Additional physical therapy was requested. In terms of physical therapy for this condition, guidelines recommend up to 12 treatment sessions over 12 weeks. The claimant has already had physical therapy. Patients are expected to continue active therapies and compliance with an independent exercise program would be expected without a need for ongoing skilled physical therapy oversight. An independent exercise program can be performed as often as needed/appropriate rather than during scheduled therapy visits and could include use of TheraBands and a BAPS board for strengthening and balance. In this case, the number of visits requested is in excess of that recommended or what might be needed to reestablish or revise the claimant's home exercise program and does not reflect a fading of skilled treatments. Therapy in excess of that necessary could promote dependence on therapy provided treatments. The request is not medically necessary.