

Case Number:	CM15-0181027		
Date Assigned:	09/22/2015	Date of Injury:	01/30/2012
Decision Date:	10/29/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/28/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/14/2015

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

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This is a 49-year-old male, whose date of injury was January 30, 2012. The medical records (7-20-15) indicated the injured worker was treated for diagnoses of left knee medial meniscal tear, left knee pain, right ankle osteoarthritis, right ankle pain and lumbago. His right ankle pain was rated a 6-7 on a 10-point scale (6-7 rating on 7-13-15). He rated his left knee pain a 9 on a 10-point scale (9 rating on 7-13-15). He used a cane for ambulatory assistance and noted continued right ankle pain with prolonged walking. He can walk about 10 minutes before experiencing pain. He used a left knee brace for support and stability and noted that his right ankle was constantly swollen. Previous treatment included 24 sessions of physical therapy with mild relief although the documentation does not reflect which injuries were treated with physical therapy. His medications included Advil, Tylenol, Aleve, Aspirin, Norco 10-325 (discontinued) Soma 350 mg (discontinued) and Ketoprofen cream (discontinued). Objective findings included appropriate heel-to-toe gait pattern without signs of antalgia, and 5-5 strength with full active range of motion in all extremities. An MRI of the right ankle dated 9-19-12 was documented by the evaluating physician as revealing plantar fascial calcaneal spur with marrow edema and thickening of the plantar fascia, mild Achilles tendinosis with insertional spur and marrow edema, and numerous areas of osseous edema. A request for authorization for aquatic therapy treatment to the right ankle and left knee for 12 sessions, two times a week for 6 weeks was received on August 27, 2015. On August 28, 2015, the Utilization Review physician determined aquatic therapy treatment to the right ankle and left knee for 12 sessions, two times a week for 6

weeks was not medically necessary based on CA MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Aquatic therapy treatment to the right ankle and left knee for 12 sessions, 2 times a week for 6 weeks: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Aquatic therapy.

Decision rationale: Aquatic Therapy does not seem appropriate, as the patient has received land-based Physical therapy. There is no records indicating intolerance of treatment, incapable of making same gains with land-based program nor is there any medical diagnosis or indication to require Aqua therapy at this time. The patient is not status-post recent lumbar or knee surgery nor is there diagnosis of morbid obesity requiring gentle aquatic rehabilitation with passive modalities and should have the knowledge to continue with functional improvement with a Home exercise program. The patient has completed formal sessions of PT and there is nothing submitted to indicate functional improvement from treatment already rendered. There is no report of new acute injuries that would require a change in the functional restoration program. There is no report of acute flare-up and the patient has been instructed on a home exercise program for this injury. Per Guidelines, physical therapy is considered medically necessary when the services require the judgment, knowledge, and skills of a qualified physical therapist due to the complexity and sophistication of the therapy and the physical condition of the patient. However, there is no clear measurable evidence of progress with the PT treatment already rendered including milestones of increased ROM, strength, and functional capacity. Review of submitted physician reports show no evidence of functional benefit, unchanged chronic symptom complaints, clinical findings, and functional status. There is no evidence documenting functional baseline with clear goals to be reached and the patient striving to reach those goals. The Chronic Pain Guidelines allow for visits of physical therapy with fading of treatment to an independent self-directed home program. Submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication to support for the pool therapy. The Aquatic therapy treatment to the right ankle and left knee for 12 sessions, 2 times a week for 6 weeks is not medically necessary and appropriate.