MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM15-0190892		
Date Assigned:	10/05/2015	Date of Injury:	01/21/2008
Decision Date:	11/10/2015	UR Denial Date:	09/08/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/28/2015

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:

The injured worker is a 60 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 01-21-2008. She has reported injury to the right shoulder. The diagnoses have included partial thickness rotator cuff tear; and bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome. Treatment to date has included medications, diagnostics, and physical therapy. Medications have included Oxycodone, Zanaflex, Alprazolam, and Zolpidem. A progress report from the treating physician, dated 08-06-2015, documented an evaluation with the injured worker. The injured worker reported right upper extremity pain; she has numbness in the arm; and she has had therapy done with little improvement. Objective findings included normal appearance and motion of the shoulder; pain was elicited during a Neer impingement test of the right shoulder; flexion strength of the shoulders was normal and extension strength of the shoulders was normal; there is weakness at 90 degrees elevation and full internal rotation; there is a "small full thickness tear of supraspinatus noted on MRI"; and there was positive impingement test after 10cc of 1% lidocaine-CS injection. The treatment plan has included the request for physical therapy for the right shoulder, 12 sessions. The original utilization review, dated 09-08-2015, non-certified the request for physical therapy for the right shoulder, 12 sessions.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical therapy for the right shoulder, 12 sessions: 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): Physical Medicine.

Decision rationale: 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. It appears the employee has received significant therapy sessions without demonstrated evidence of functional improvement to allow for additional therapy treatments. There is no report of acute flare-up, new injuries, or change in symptom or clinical findings to support for formal PT in a patient that has been instructed on a home exercise program for this chronic 2008 injury. Submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication to support further physical therapy when prior treatment rendered has not resulted in any functional benefit. The Physical therapy for the right shoulder, 12 sessions is not medically necessary or appropriate.