

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0197610		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	10/13/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	07/02/2008
<b>Decision Date:</b>	11/25/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	10/01/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	10/07/2015

### 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: North Carolina

Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

### 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 59 year old male, who sustained an industrial-work injury on 7-2-08. A review of the medical records indicates that the injured worker is undergoing treatment for crush injury, neuropathic pain, ganglion cyst, crepitus and fractured foot bone. Treatment to date has included pain medication, supportive orthotics, supportive shoes, supportive orthopedic devices, nerve block, Unna boot ace wrap, and H-wave use since at least 6-19-12. Medical records dated (2-22-13 to 11-8-13) indicate that the injured worker complains of severe pain in midfoot, crepitus, compensatory gait changes, swelling and burning. The pain is rated 7-8 out of 10 on the pain scale. The physical exam dated from (2-22-13 to 11-8-13) reveals altered gait-traumatic arthritis with compensatory gait changes causing low back and bilateral knee pain. The injured worker is status post-crush injury with traumatic arthritis to the midfoot and forefoot and fractured midfoot with crepitus. The physician indicates at each visit that H-wave and ultrasound were used. The H-wave was used on the foot to stimulate the nerves and decrease the pain. The request for authorization date was 11-8-13 and requested service included Retrospective request for 1 in house H-wave treatment, DOS: 11-08-2013. The original Utilization review dated 10-1-15 non-certified the request for 1 in house H-wave treatment, DOS: 11-08-2013.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Retrospective request for 1 in house H-wave treatment, DOS: 11/08/2013: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Transcutaneous electrotherapy.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Transcutaneous electrotherapy.

**Decision rationale:** The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on H-wave stimulation therapy states: H-wave stimulation (HWT) is not recommended as an isolated intervention, but a one-month home-based trial of H Wave stimulation may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option for diabetic neuropathic pain (Julka, 1998) (Kumar, 1997) (Kumar, 1998), or chronic soft tissue inflammation if used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration, and only following failure of initially recommended conservative care, including recommended physical therapy (i.e., exercise) and medications, plus transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS). In a recent retrospective study suggesting effectiveness of the H-wave device, the patient selection criteria included a physician documented diagnosis of chronic soft-tissue injury or neuropathic pain in an upper or lower extremity or the spine that was unresponsive to conventional therapy, including physical therapy, medications, and TENS. (Blum, 2006) (Blum 2, 2006) There is no evidence that H-Wave is more effective as an initial treatment when compared to TENS for analgesic effects. A randomized controlled trial comparing analgesic effects of H wave therapy and TENS on pain threshold found that there were no differences between the different modalities or HWT frequencies. (McDowell2, 1999) [Note: This may be a different device than the H-Wave approved for use in the US.] The clinical documentation for review does not include a one month trial of H wave therapy with objective significant improvements in pain and function. Therefore criteria for a home unit purchase have not been met and the request is not medically necessary.