

Case Number:	CM15-0202865		
Date Assigned:	10/19/2015	Date of Injury:	04/21/2015
Decision Date:	12/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/14/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/15/2015

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: 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 40 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 4-21-15. The injured worker reported right hand pain. A review of the medical records indicates that the injured worker is undergoing treatments for right 3rd trigger finger. Medical records dated 9-30-15 indicates pain rated at 6 out of 10, Medical records dated 9-16-15 indicate pain rated at 7 out of 10. Records indicate "TENS is helpful, relaxing and decreases pain." Provider documentation dated 9-30-15 noted the work status as return to modified work 9-30-15. Treatment has included TENS unit, physical therapy, injection therapy, and Paraffin treatment. Objective findings dated 9-30-15 were notable for right upper extremity noted for Tinel's and Phalen's signs with tenderness to palpation. The original utilization review (10-14-15) partially approved a request for a TENS unit. A letter of appeal dated 10/7/15 was reviewed. This letter of appeal provided absolutely no clinical information but instead contained a "boiler plate" random assortment of quotes from MTUS guidelines concerning requested services that was denied. Provider has not bothered to provide a rationale or how any of the random copy and pasted quotes related to services requested.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TENS unit: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

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

Decision rationale: As per MTUS Chronic pain guidelines, TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation) may be recommended only if it meets criteria. Evidence for its efficacy is poor. Pt does not meet criteria to recommend TENS. TENS is only recommended for neuropathic or Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) pain. Patient has a diagnosis of trigger finger pain. There is no documentation of failures of multiple conservative treatment modalities. Guidelines recommend use only with Functional Restoration program which is not documented. There is no documentation of short or long term goal of TENS unit. There is no documentation of an appropriate 1month trial of TENS. There is vague claims of "50%" improvement in pain which is not correlated with any objective measures such as VAS or documentation any decrease in pain medications. There is no documentation of any improvement in functional status. There is no documentation of how long patient has been using TENS, if TENS was ever approved by UR or if there ever was a successful 1month trial. There is no required documentation of how often if was being used daily and multiple other criteria. Patient fails multiple criteria for TENS. TENS is not medically necessary.