MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM15-0020222		
Date Assigned:	02/09/2015	Date of Injury:	12/03/1997
Decision Date:	03/30/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/15/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/03/2015

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: Maryland, Texas, Virginia
Certification(s)/Specialty: Internal Medicine, Allergy and Immunology, Rheumatology

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 66 year old male sustained an industrial injury on 12/3/97. He subsequently reports chronic right ankle difficulties. Diagnoses include right ankle prosthetic joint infection. The injured worker has undergone multiple knee and ankle surgeries to include the most recent with I&D of abcess. The patient has been using a vacuum-assisted wound closure device with improvement in his wound. On 1/15/15, Utilization Review denied the request for a Two-Month Extension of Wound Vacuum Therapy. The Two-Month Extension of Wound Vacuum Therapy was denied based on ODG guidelines.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

1 Two-Month Extension Of Wound Vacuum Therapy: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Ankle, Vacuum-assisted closure wound-healing

Decision rationale: The MTUS is silent on Vacuum-assisted closure wound-healing devices, so ODG were used. The state in regards to Vacuum-assisted closure wound-healing devices, they are, recommended in the treatment of diabetes-associated chronic leg wounds and diabetic ulcers of the feet. Under study for other wounds. Chronic skin wounds (including pressure ulcers, diabetic ulcers, and vascular ulcers) are a major source of morbidity, lead to considerable disability, and are associated with increased mortality. Vacuum-assisted closure therapy is a technology designed to improve wound healing. A thorough systematic review found consistent evidence of the benefit of negative pressure wound therapy (NPWT) in the treatment of diabetic ulcers of the feet. Results for bedsores was conflicting and research on mixed wounds was of poor quality, but promising. The review did not find evidence of increased significant complications. The review concluded that there is now sufficient evidence to show that NPWT is safe, and will accelerate healing, to justify its use in the treatment of diabetes-associated chronic leg wounds. There is also evidence, though of poor quality, to suggest that healing of other wounds may also be accelerated. In this case, there is no evidence that the patient is a diabetic and that the wound is a diabetic ulcer. The Vacuum-assisted closure wound-healing is being used to aid in wound healing post-op ankle surgery (I&D abcess). There is evidence but poor quality that these devices help in wounds other than diabetic wounds. The medical records indicate an improvement in wound healing with this device prompting the UR to modify its decision to allow for 1 month use and follow up in 4 weeks as requested by the provider which is reasonable. As such, the request for Two month extension of wound vacuum therapy is not medically necessary.