

Case Number:	CM15-0021707		
Date Assigned:	03/24/2015	Date of Injury:	08/10/2011
Decision Date:	05/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/13/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/05/2015

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: Connecticut, California, Virginia
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational 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 65 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 08/10/11. Initial complaints and diagnoses are not available. Treatments to date include medications, bilateral knee replacements, and therapy. Diagnostic studies are not discussed. Current complaints include falls, fear of falling, and need for assistance with activities of daily living. In a progress note dated 01/08/15 the treating provider reports the plan of care as medications, and deference to another provider regarding assistance with activities of daily living and physical therapy as she is now almost one year out from her left knee replacement. The requested treatment is physical therapy.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical therapy visits x 12: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical medicine.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines manual therapy and manipulation Page(s): 111-112.

Decision rationale: The MTUS Chronic Pain Management Guidelines (pg 58-59) indicate that manual therapy and manipulation are recommended as options in low back pain. With respect to therapeutic care, the MTUS recommends a trial of 6 visits over 2 weeks, with evidence of objective functional improvement allowing for up to 18 visits over 6-8 weeks. If the case is considered a recurrence/flare-up, the guidelines similarly indicate a need to evaluate treatment success. In either case, whether considered acute or recurrent, the patient needs to be evaluated for functional improvement prior to the completion of 12 visits in order to meet the standards outlined in the guidelines. This patient has a complicated history that requires close follow up and evaluation for improvement and efficacy of treatment. With multiple injured body parts, specific goals for treatment should be outlined when considering therapy. A note (Nov 18, 2014) by William Vance, DPT, states that the patient has met goals and would be independent with a home exercise program in 6 weeks. Overall, it is quite possible the patient may benefit from conservative treatment with further manual therapy at this time. However, early re-evaluation for efficacy of treatment/functional improvement is critical. The guidelines indicate a time to produce effect of 4-6 treatments, which provides a reasonable timeline by which to reassess the patient and ensure that education, counseling, and evaluation for functional improvement occur. In this case, the request for a total of 12 visits to physical therapy without a definitive plan to assess for added clinical benefit prior to completion of the entire course of therapy is not considered medically necessary.