

Case Number:	CM15-0216674		
Date Assigned:	11/06/2015	Date of Injury:	05/22/2008
Decision Date:	12/24/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/12/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/03/2015

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: New Jersey

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 70 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 5-22-08. The 4-1-09 note indicates that the treating provider's opinion was that 80% of the injured work's hearing loss was due to working for [REDACTED]. On 9-29-15, there was correspondence for the injured worker to be fit for new hearing aids as his current ones are 5 years old, are used constantly and are beginning to have intermittent issues. The treating provider recommends that the injured worker be fitted with [REDACTED] Alta Pro mini Rites, bilaterally. The request for authorization dated 10-5-15 was for bilateral hearing aids; [REDACTED] Alta Pro mini Rites. On 10-12-15 Utilization Review non-certified the requests for bilateral hearing aids; [REDACTED] Alta Pro mini Rites.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Bilateral hearing aides: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Head (updated 07/24/2015) - Online Version.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Head section, Hearing aids.

Decision rationale: The MTUS Guidelines do not address hearing aid use. The ODG, however, states that they may be recommended for conductive hearing loss unresponsive to medical or surgical interventions, sensorineural hearing loss (due to aging, congenital abnormalities, infectious causes, trauma, exposure to loud noises, use of certain drugs, fluid build-up in the middle ear, or from a tumor), or mixed hearing loss. Hearing aids should be recommended by an otolaryngologist or a qualified audiologist, and prior authorization should be requested for hearing aids costing more than [REDACTED] per ear (including evaluation, fitting costs) once every four years. In the case of this worker, who had significant hearing loss partially from industrial cause, had been wearing hearing aides regularly for over 5 years. The report sent by the audiologist from 9/2015 stated that there was intermittent problems with the hearing aides and stated that a new set ([REDACTED] alta pro mini rites) would be needed to replace the dysfunctional older hearing aides. The previous reviewer suggested that this should be disapproved due to lack of documentation by the provider, however, this would not add much to the request. The hearing loss has not likely improved and if the units are dysfunctional as stated by the audiologist, replacement is medically necessary. Therefore, the request for bilateral hearing aides is medically necessary.

[REDACTED] **alta pro mini rites:** Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Head (updated 07/24/2015) - Online Version.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Head section, Hearing aids.

Decision rationale: In the case of this worker, who had significant hearing loss partially from industrial cause, had been wearing hearing aides regularly for over 5 years. The report sent by the audiologist from 9/2015 stated that there was intermittent problems with the hearing aides and stated that a new set ([REDACTED] alta pro mini rites) would be needed to replace the dysfunctional older hearing aides. The previous reviewer suggested that this should be disapproved due to lack of documentation by the provider; however, this would not add much to the request. The hearing loss has not likely improved and if the units are dysfunctional as stated by the audiologist, replacement is medically necessary, in the opinion of this reviewer. Therefore, the request for [REDACTED] Alta Pro Mini Rites is medically necessary.