

Case Number:	CM15-0226069		
Date Assigned:	11/24/2015	Date of Injury:	05/12/2014
Decision Date:	12/31/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/22/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/17/2015

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: Arizona, California
 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 35 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 05-12-2014. A review of the medical records indicates that the worker is undergoing treatment for open wound of finger, complicated and status post Z-plasty with contracture release of right first webspace. Treatment has included pain medication, application of heat, massage, surgery and at least 9 sessions of post-operative occupational therapy. Documentation notes that overall condition with occupational therapy was a little better but there was no documentation of significant pain relief or objective functional improvement with therapy visits. On 08-27-2015, the worker was noted to be scheduled for scar contracture release with Z-plasty the following day. Objective findings showed continued limited abduction of the right thumb with scar contracture at the first web space and scar thickening with mild tenderness at the right first web space with pain on full abduction of the thumb. On 09-10-2015, the worker was noted to be 13 days status post first web space release with Z-plasty with no complaints. Objective findings showed healed incision without infection. Sutures were noted as being discontinued. Treatment plan included therapy three times a week for four weeks and resting splint. Subjective complaints (10-08-2015) included some tightness and soreness at the surgical site. Pain level was not quantified. Objective findings (10-08-2015) included mild scar thickening across the first web space with overall improvement with full radial abduction and grip strength of 80 on the right side and 90 on the left side. The physician noted that the injured worker's scar was documented as improving with therapy and that a request for continuation of therapy three times a week for four weeks was being made with no rationale for the need for additional therapy provided. A utilization review dated 10-22-2015 non-certified a request for occupational therapy 3x4 right hand.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Occupational Therapy 3x4 Right Hand: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Postsurgical Treatment 2009.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints 2004, Section(s): Physical Methods, Initial Care, and Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Physical Medicine, and Postsurgical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Forearm, Wrist, & Hand.

Decision rationale: According to the guidelines, 8-10 sessions of therapy are appropriate for most conditions. According to the surgical guidelines, 12-16 sessions for the finger may be needed after surgery. The claimant completed an unknown amount of post-operative therapy several months prior and recently up to at least 13 sessions of physical therapy. As a result, the request for an additional 8 sessions of occupational therapy is not medically necessary.