

Case Number:	CM15-0031372		
Date Assigned:	02/24/2015	Date of Injury:	06/20/2014
Decision Date:	04/02/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/21/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/19/2015

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: North Carolina

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 was a 52 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury, June 20, 2014. According to progress note of December 15, 2014 the injured workers chief complaint was right knee pain and preparation for right arthroscopic surgery. According to the progress note of December 15, 2014 the primary physician felt the injured worker would need 2 weeks of home physical therapy then continue as an outpatient physical therapy, due to decreased range of motion and pain. The physical exam noted tenderness of the right knee with crepitation and slight swelling. The injured worker walked with an antalgic gait. The injured worker was diagnosed with cervical, thoracic, lumbar sprain, right knee meniscal tear with mild to moderate osteoarthritis. 3mm cervical disc protrusion at C4-C5, C5-C6, C6-C7, left knee contusion sprain, left ankle sprain/strain, lumbar disc protrusion grade 1 at L5-S1 listhesis moderate to severe stenosis and bilateral wrist contusion. The injured worker previously received the following treatments physical therapy, right knee brace and pain medication. On December 15, 2014, the primary treating physician requested authorization for postoperative home physical therapy 2 times a week for 3 weeks. On January 21, 2015, the Utilization Review denied authorization for postoperative home physical therapy 2 times a week for 3 weeks. The denial was based on the MTUS/ACOEM and ODG guidelines.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Post-operative In Home Physical Therapy 2x3: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines physical medicine Page(s): 98-99.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on physical medicine states: Recommended as indicated below. Passive therapy (those treatment modalities that do not require energy expenditure on the part of the patient) can provide short term relief during the early phases of pain treatment and are directed at controlling symptoms such as pain, inflammation and swelling and to improve the rate of healing soft tissue injuries. They can be used sparingly with active therapies to help control swelling, pain and inflammation during the rehabilitation process. Active therapy is based on the philosophy that therapeutic exercise and/or activity are beneficial for restoring flexibility, strength, endurance, function, range of motion, and can alleviate discomfort. Active therapy requires an internal effort by the individual to complete a specific exercise or task. This form of therapy may require supervision from a therapist or medical provider such as verbal, visual and/or tactile instruction(s). Patients are instructed and expected to continue active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement levels. Home exercise can include exercise with or without mechanical assistance or resistance and functional activities with assistive devices. (Colorado, 2002) (Airaksinen, 2006) Patient-specific hand therapy is very important in reducing swelling, decreasing pain, and improving range of motion in CRPS. (Li, 2005) The use of active treatment modalities (e.g., exercise, education, activity modification) instead of passive treatments is associated with substantially better clinical outcomes. In a large case series of patients with low back pain treated by physical therapists, those adhering to guidelines for active rather than passive treatments incurred fewer treatment visits, cost less, and had less pain and less disability. The overall success rates were 64.7% among those adhering to the active treatment recommendations versus 36.5% for passive treatment. (Fritz, 2007) Physical Medicine Guidelines: Allow for fading of treatment frequency (from up to 3 visits per week to 1 or less), plus active self-directed home Physical Medicine. Myalgia and myositis, unspecified (ICD9 729.1): 9-10 visits over 8 weeks, Neuralgia, neuritis, and radiculitis, unspecified (ICD9 729.2), 8- 10 visits over 4 weeks. Reflex sympathetic dystrophy (CRPS) (ICD9 337.2): 24 visits over 16 weeks. The requested amount of physical therapy is within the parameters as recommended above in the California MTUS. However there is no clinical rationale for why the patient would need home physical therapy. Therefore the request is not certified.