

Case Number:	CM15-0059776		
Date Assigned:	04/06/2015	Date of Injury:	12/02/2010
Decision Date:	05/05/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/11/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/30/2015

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: Massachusetts

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Pain Management

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 56 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 12/2/10. The injured worker reported symptoms in the low back, right elbow and bilateral feet. The injured worker was diagnosed as having bilateral plantar fasciitis, lumbosacral/joint/ligament sprain/strain, right lateral epicondylitis, and right shoulder strain/sprain. Treatments to date have included ultrasound treatment, oral pain medication, home exercise program, and transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation unit. Currently, the injured worker complains of pain in the low back, right elbow and bilateral feet. The plan of care was for paraffin bath, ultrasound therapy and a follow up appointment at a later date.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Retrospective paraffin bath on bilateral foot/ankle for 15 min x 3 dips with a date of service of 2/4/2015: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Forearm, Wrist and Hand Chapter, Paraffin Wax Baths.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM), 2nd Edition, (2004) Chapter 6, p128.

Decision rationale: The claimant sustained a work-related injury in December 2010 and continues to be treated for low back, right elbow, and bilateral foot pain. There are many forms of heat therapy with varying penetration depths. Paraffin wax treatment can be effective for superficially located pain such as arthritic pain involving the hands and fingers. However, guidelines recommend against the application of heat therapy modalities by a healthcare provider when the patient can perform this independently. This would include use of a home paraffin wax system. Therefore, the requested paraffin wax treatments that were provided are not medically necessary.

Retrospective Ultrasound therapy (Visit #8) on low back with a date of service of 2/10/2015:
Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Ultrasound, therapeutic Page(s): 123.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Ultrasound, therapeutic, p123 Page(s): 123.

Decision rationale: The claimant sustained a work-related injury in December 2010 and continues to be treated for low back, right elbow, and bilateral foot pain. Therapeutic ultrasound is not recommended in the treatment of chronic pain. The effectiveness of ultrasound for treating people with pain, musculoskeletal injuries, and soft tissue lesions remains questionable. There is little evidence that active therapeutic ultrasound is more effective than placebo ultrasound for treating people with pain or a range of musculoskeletal injuries or for promoting soft tissue healing. Therefore the ultrasound treatments are not medically necessary.