

Case Number:	CM15-0081146		
Date Assigned:	05/01/2015	Date of Injury:	10/09/2006
Decision Date:	07/16/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/24/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/27/2015

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: Texas, New York, California
 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 applicant is a represented 36-year-old who has filed a claim for chronic posttraumatic headaches and alleged hearing loss reportedly associated with an industrial injury of October 9, 2006. In a Utilization Review report dated March 24, 2015, the claims administrator failed to approve a request for a hearing aid purchase. The claims administrator referenced a March 20, 2015 RFA form and associated progress note of March 9, 2015 in its determination. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On March 9, 2015, the applicant was described as having sustained a traumatic injury to the face and ear. The applicant still reported difficulty hearing. The applicant also had issues with chronic pain and depression. The applicant had used Wellbutrin, Lunesta, Cialis, Motrin, Prilosec, and Topamax at various points in time. The applicant was placed off of work, on total temporary disability. The applicant was described as having ongoing left ear difficulties with decreased hearing. The applicant's symptoms were attributed to traumatic industrial injury. Results of audiometry (if any) were not reported. A hearing aid was apparently proposed. On September 14, 2014, the attending provider conducted a comprehensive chart review, which included report of April 23, 2007 tympanoplasty surgery, which the applicant had undergone. The applicant had received extensive psychological counseling, it was reported. The audiometry results were not seemingly discussed. On November 17, 2014, the applicant did consult an otolaryngologist who commented on mid-to-high frequency left ear hearing loss. A hearing aid trial was suggested.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Hearing Aid for purchase: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Head, Hearing Aids.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG Integrated Treatment/ Disability Duration Guidelines Head, Hearing aids.

Decision rationale: Yes, the proposed hearing aid purchase was medically necessary, medically appropriate, and indicated here. The MTUS does not address the topic of hearing aids. However, ODG's Head Chapter hearing aids topic does acknowledge that hearing aids are recommended for all forms of hearing loss, including the mid-to-high frequency sensorineural hearing loss reportedly present here. The applicant did apparently sustain trauma to the ear resulting in the hearing loss confirmed on audiometry of November 17, 2014. Providing the applicant with the hearing aid in question was, thus, indicated. Therefore, the request was medically necessary.