

Case Number:	CM14-0120837		
Date Assigned:	09/16/2014	Date of Injury:	11/05/2007
Decision Date:	10/23/2014	UR Denial Date:	07/24/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/30/2014

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. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Occupational Medicine and is licensed to practice in California. 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

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 [REDACTED] employee who has filed a claim for chronic shoulder, hand, neck, and low back pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of November 5, 2007. Thus far, the applicant has been treated with the following: Analgesic medications; unspecified amounts of physical therapy; topical agents; and transfer of care to and from various providers in various specialties. In a Utilization Review Report dated September 29, 2014, the claims administrator denied a request for 16 sessions of physical therapy to the neck. The claims administrator suggested that the applicant had had eight sessions of physical therapy previously authorized in April 2014 alone. In a physical therapy progress note dated June 30, 2014, the applicant was described as having persistent complaints of neck, shoulder, and paraspinal pain. The note was highly templated. The note did seemingly suggest that the applicant had not met all of her goals of transition to a home exercise program. On June 9, 2014, it was suggested that the applicant was performing data entry work as a financial processor. In an April 18, 2014 progress note, the applicant reported heightened neck pain complaints secondary to an increased work load. The applicant graded her pain as dull and aching. The applicant was using topical lidocaine, Lidoderm patches, and Voltaren gel. Painful cervical range of motion was noted with normal shoulder range of motion. The applicant was asked to continue current treatment, including home exercises.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

PHYSICAL THERAPY TO NECK QTY. 16: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines PHYSICAL MEDICINE.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine topic Page(s): 98-99.

Decision rationale: The 16-session course of treatment proposed, in and of itself, represents treatment in excess of the 9- to 10-session course recommended on page 99 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines for myalgias and myositis of various body parts, the issue reportedly present here. No rationale for treatment this far in excess of the MTUS parameters was proffered, particularly in light of the fact that page 98 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines stipulates that applicants are expected to continue active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement level. In this case, the applicant has apparently returned to work as a financial data processor. It was not clearly established why the applicant cannot transition to self-directed home physical medicine, as suggested on page 98 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.