

Case Number:	CM14-0148171		
Date Assigned:	09/18/2014	Date of Injury:	05/01/2014
Decision Date:	10/16/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/21/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/11/2014

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 Anesthesiology, has a subspecialty in Pain Management 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 55-year-old female with a 3/27/14 date of injury. At the time (7/24/14) of request for authorization for Physical therapy for bilateral hands, 2 times a week for 6 weeks, QTY: 12 sessions, there is documentation of subjective (severe and radiating left wrist pain) and objective (left wrist edema, decreased left grip strength, and positive Phalen's test and Tinel's sign) findings, current diagnoses (bilateral wrist sprain/strain and left wrist tenosynovitis), and treatment to date (medications, EMG/NCV, acupuncture, and 6 sessions of physical therapy). Medical reports identify early return of function with treatment of physical medicine.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical therapy for bilateral hands, 2 times a week for 6 weeks, QTY: 12 sessions: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints Page(s): 263-266 and 271.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines physical medicine Page(s): 98. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG: Forearm, Wrist, and Hand, Physical Therapy (PT) Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: Title 8, California Code of Regulations, section 9792.20

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines support a brief course of physical medicine for patients with chronic pain not to exceed 10 visits over 4-8 weeks with allowance for fading of treatment frequency, with transition to an active self-directed program of independent home physical medicine/therapeutic exercise. MTUS-Definitions identifies that any treatment intervention should not be continued in the absence of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services. ODG recommends a limited course of physical therapy for patients with a diagnosis of Sprains and strains of wrist and hand not to exceed 9 visits over 8 weeks. ODG also notes patients should be formally assessed after a "six-visit clinical trial" to see if the patient is moving in a positive direction, no direction, or a negative direction (prior to continuing with the physical therapy) and when treatment requests exceeds guideline recommendations, the physician must provide a statement of exceptional factors to justify going outside of guideline parameters. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of bilateral wrist sprain/strain and left wrist tenosynovitis. In addition, given documentation of early return of function with treatment of physical medicine, there is documentation of functional benefit and increase in activity tolerance as a result of previous physical therapy treatments. However, the requested physical therapy treatments, in addition to the treatments already completed, would exceed guidelines. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Physical therapy for bilateral hands, 2 times a week for 6 weeks, QTY: 12 sessions is not medically necessary.