

Case Number:	CM14-0164320		
Date Assigned:	10/09/2014	Date of Injury:	03/11/2012
Decision Date:	11/13/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/08/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/06/2014

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 injured worker is a represented [REDACTED] employee who has filed a claim for chronic knee and low back pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of March 11, 2012. Thus far, the injured worker has been treated with the following: Analgesic medications; earlier knee arthroscopy; and unspecified amounts of physical therapy over the course of the claim. In a Utilization Review Report dated September 8, 2014, the claims administrator denied a request for six sessions of physical therapy. The injured worker's attorney subsequently appealed. In a January 24, 2014 progress note, the injured worker was placed off of work, on total temporary disability. In a July 14, 2014 Medical-legal Evaluation, the injured worker was placed off of work, on total temporary disability. The injured worker was having difficulty performing basic activities of daily living, including dancing, running, house cleaning, and stair climbing. The injured worker's daughter was helping her with her laundry. The injured worker had not worked since several years, it was acknowledged. On May 12, 2014, authorization was sought for a functional restoration program. In a May 21, 2014 progress note, it was acknowledged that the injured worker was not working. The injured worker reported persistent complaints of low back and knee pain exacerbated by sitting, standing, lifting, bending, and squatting. The earlier physical therapy did not help, the injured worker acknowledged.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical therapy 3 x a week x 2 weeks for the lumbar spine: 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): 8, 99.

Decision rationale: While page 99 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines does support a general course of 9-10 sessions of treatment for myalgias and myositis of various body parts which is the issue reportedly present here in this recommendation. However, is qualified by commentary made on page 8 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines to the effect that there must be demonstration of functional improvement at various milestones in a treatment program in order to justify continued treatment. In this case, however, the injured worker is off of work, on total temporary disability and the earlier physical therapy was not effectual. The injured worker is having difficulty performing activities of daily living as basic as sitting, standing, walking, kneeling, squatting, doing laundry, performing household chores, etc. Based on the evidence provided, there is a lack of function improvement as defined in MTUS s9792.20f, despite earlier unspecified amount of physical therapy. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.