

Case Number:	CM14-0093624		
Date Assigned:	07/25/2014	Date of Injury:	10/05/2004
Decision Date:	09/17/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/22/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/20/2014

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 Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and is licensed to practice in CA. 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:

This is a 45-year-old male with a 10/5/04 date of injury. The patient had an ORIF of the right ankle on 5/22/06 and a subsequent hardware removal on 2/6/07. The patient was seen on 4/29/14 with complaints of pain in the right foot and ankle, 7/10. He was noted to require a cane to ambulate. Exam findings revealed full range of motion of the right ankle with pain in all planes of motion, mild tenderness in the lateral aspect of the foot, and an antalgic gait. The request for aqua therapy was made as the patient had difficulty exercising on land due to ankle pain and was noted to be gaining weight, however a BMI was not documented. He was seen again on 6/24/14 with 8/10 right foot and ankle pain. He had not yet started his aqua therapy. The diagnosis is chronic ankle pain. Treatment to date has included medications, surgery, and physical therapy. A Utilization Review decision dated 5/22/14 modified the request to 6 sessions of aqua therapy as no prior documentation of the patient's physical therapy was provided and 6 sessions would provide an adequate trial to assess for benefit.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Pool Therapy 8 sessions, Right Ankle: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aquatic therapy Page(s): 22. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Treatment Index, 11th Edition (web), 2013, Ankle & Foot, Physical Therapy.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aqua Therapy Page(s): 22. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Ankle and Foot Chapter-Physical Therapy ankle sprain, Physical Therapy Preface.

Decision rationale: CA MTUS states that aquatic therapy is recommended as an optional form of exercise therapy, where available, as an alternative to land-based physical therapy when reduced weight bearing is indicated, such as with extreme obesity. This patient had an ORIF to the right ankle in 2007 with subsequent hardware removal in 2007. He has had ongoing pain of 7/10 on VAS despite treatment measures and requires a cane and has a limp. The Utilization Review decision modified the request of 8 aqua therapy sessions to 6 sessions as ODG recommends a 6-session trial to assess for benefit and there was a lack of documentation regarding his prior physical therapy. The most recent progress note dated 6/24/14 stated the patient had not yet started these sessions. There is a lack of documentation regarding the 6 sessions of aqua therapy that have been certified, as well as the patient's prior physical therapy to his right ankle and foot. It is unclear whether the patient has derived any benefit from these 6 certified sessions or whether the patient has even started these sessions to date. Therefore, the request for pool therapy 8 sessions as requested was not medically necessary.