

Case Number:	CM14-0211183		
Date Assigned:	12/24/2014	Date of Injury:	05/28/2013
Decision Date:	03/04/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/04/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/17/2014

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. 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: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 patient is a 54 year old female with an injury date on 5/28/13. The patient complains of continued severe left knee pain per 12/3/14 report. The patient is using a cane to walk, and has been authorized for [REDACTED] weight loss program in order to lose weight before a knee surgery per 12/3/14 report. The treater wants to use aquaotherapy as well as a weight loss program to encourage the patient to exercise on her own per 11/4/14 report. Based on the 12/3/14 progress report provided by the treating physician, the diagnoses are: 1. left knee degeneration, bone on bone, and destroyed cartilage on the left knee. Probably candidate for the left knee replacement 2. morbid obesity. Height is 5 feet tall and weight is 280 pounds Physical exams on 12/3/14, 11/4/14, and 9/14/14 showed "unchanged." The most recent physical exam was done on 8/18/14 which showed left knee range of motion is limited, with flexion at 115 degrees. Obviously obese, carries about 150 extra pounds on her 5 feet tall frame." The patient's treatment history includes medications, MRI left knee, X-ray left knee, physical therapy. The treating physician is requesting outpatient aquatic therapy 8 times to right knee qty: 8. The utilization review determination being challenged is dated 12/4/14. The requesting physician provided treatment reports from 7/2/13 to 12/3/14.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Outpatient Aquatic Therapy 8 times to Right Knee, quantity 8.00: Overturned

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines physical medicine Page(s): 98-99.

Decision rationale: This patient presents with left knee pain. The treater has asked for OUTPATIENT AQUATIC THERAPY 8 TIMES TO RIGHT KNEE QTY: 8 on 12/3/14 because of the lack of ability for her to exercise on land for her left knee range of motion and low back range of motion. Review of the reports show no record of prior aqua therapy the patient completed 13 land-based physical therapy sessions a year ago, dated from 11/14/13 to 1/23/14 but the level of benefit was not documented. Regarding aquatic therapy, MTUS states: "Aquatic therapy (including swimming) can minimize the effects of gravity, so it is specifically recommended where reduced weight bearing is desirable, for example extreme obesity." MTUS guidelines allows for 8-10 sessions of physical therapy for various myalgias and neuralgias. In this case, there is no documentation of extreme obesity, or need for reduced weight-bearing exercises. Furthermore, the request does not include a specified number of aqua therapy sessions. In this case, the patient is morbidly obese as she is 5 feet tall and weighs 280 pounds. The patient ambulates with a cane and is unable to do land-based physical therapy. The treater has requested 8 sessions of aquatherapy to aid in weight loss before a knee surgery, which is medically reasonable for this patient's condition. The request IS medically necessary.