

Case Number:	CM14-0213709		
Date Assigned:	12/31/2014	Date of Injury:	10/06/2011
Decision Date:	03/03/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/24/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/22/2014

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: Texas, Ohio, California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine

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 foot pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of October 10, 2011. In a Utilization Review Report dated November 24, 2014, the claims administrator denied a request for 12 sessions of physical therapy. The claims administrator referenced a progress note dated November 11, 2014 in its determination. The claims administrator suggested that the applicant was off of work and had had extensive physical therapy following a July 25, 2014 plantar fascia release procedure. The claims administrator also apparently referenced non-MTUS ODG Guidelines in its determination. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On March 18, 2014, the applicant reported persistent complaints of foot and heel pain. The applicant was status post a right foot plantar fascia release and had residual issues with left foot plantar fasciitis, it was noted. In a handwritten note dated November 11, 2014, difficult to follow, not entirely legible, the attending provider seemingly sought authorization for an additional 12 sessions of physical therapy. The applicant had apparently retired, the treating provider suggested. In an associated narrative report of November 11, 2014, the applicant was described as having six pending sessions of physical therapy following earlier plantar fascia release surgery. The applicant's functional status was reportedly improving. The applicant exhibited normal sensorium about the feet, 5/5 lower extremity strength, and full weight bearing status with apparently only slightly antalgic ambulation. The applicant exhibited normal range of motion about both feet. An additional 12 sessions of treatment beyond the six pending treatments were sought.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical therapy x 12 visits: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG)

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: No, the request for 12 sessions of physical therapy was not medically necessary, medically appropriate, or indicated here. The applicant was still within the six-month postsurgical physical medicine treatment period established in MTUS 9792.24.3.a.3 for all surgeries not specifically covered by the guideline following an earlier plantar fascia release surgery of July 25, 2014. While the MTUS postsurgical treatment guidelines do not specifically address the topic of physical therapy duration following plantar fascia release surgery, MTUS 9792.24.3.c.4 notes that the frequency of visits shall be gradually reduced or discontinued as an applicant gains independence in management of symptoms and with achievement of functional goals. Here, the applicant was described on the office visit on which additional physical therapy was requested of November 11, 2014 as exhibiting well-preserved, 5/5 lower extremity strength, normal sensorium, full weight bearing status, well-preserved range of motion, etc. As the attending provider himself acknowledged, the applicant was demonstrating significant progress. The applicant was, by all accounts, making significant strides. The applicant had six additional sessions of physical therapy physical therapy treatment pending. While MTUS 9792.24.3.c.2 does note that an applicant's essential work functions could compel further treatment beyond MTUS parameters, in this case, the applicant had already retired from her job. The applicant had, by all accounts, achieved most (if not all) of her functional goals on or around November 11, 2014. Six sessions of previously authorized physical therapy were pending as of that point in time. No compelling case, thus, was made for such a lengthy, protracted course of treatment when the applicant had essentially achieved functional goals. Therefore, the request was not medically necessary.