

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0017897		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	02/05/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	12/10/2008
<b>Decision Date:</b>	03/26/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	01/07/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	01/30/2015

### 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: Massachusetts

Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, Pain Management

### 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 58 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 12/10/2008. He has reported slipped and fell subsequently hurting the neck, back, left shoulder and left wrist. Treatment to date has included Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), activity modification, physical therapy, and surgical intervention. Currently, the IW complains of right shoulder pain, neck pain, and bilateral upper extremity numbness. December 19, 2014, orthopedic evaluation documented continued right shoulder pain, associated with stiffness, decreased Range of Motion (ROM) and locking. Physical examination significant for tenderness to AC joint, course crepitus, positive impingement test, Neer and Hawkins-Kennedy tests positive, decreased Range of Motion (ROM), 4/5 strength, and additional findings. Diagnoses included rotator cuff tear right shoulder, cervical and lumbar myofascitis, degenerative joint disease cervical and lumbar spine, chronic synovitis left wrist, tendinitis bilateral shoulders, status post cervical fusion. The plan of care included right shoulder arthroscopy and debridement, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) of wrist, neurology consult, back brace, and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) of right shoulder. On 1/7/2015 Utilization Review non-certified physical therapy for left hand, noting the documentation did not support exceeding the total number of treatments usually recommended. The ODG Guidelines were cited. On 1/30/2015, the injured worker submitted an application for IMR for review of physical therapy for left hand.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Physical therapy for the left hand; 12 sessions:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Physical therapy

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98.

**Decision rationale:** Physical Medicine is recommended as indicated below. Passive therapy (those treatment modalities that do not require energy expenditure on the part of the patient) can provide short term relief during the early phases of pain treatment and are directed at controlling symptoms such as pain, inflammation and swelling and to improve the rate of healing soft tissue injuries. They can be used sparingly with active therapies to help control swelling, pain and inflammation during the rehabilitation process. Active therapy is based on the philosophy that therapeutic exercise and/or activity are beneficial for restoring flexibility, strength, endurance, function, range of motion, and can alleviate discomfort. Active therapy requires an internal effort by the individual to complete a specific exercise or task. This form of therapy may require supervision from a therapist or medical provider such as verbal, visual and/or tactile instruction(s). Patients are instructed and expected to continue active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement levels. Home exercise can include exercise with or without mechanical assistance or resistance and functional activities with assistive devices. (Colorado, 2002) (Airaksinen, 2006) Patient-specific hand therapy is very important in reducing swelling, decreasing pain, and improving range of motion in CRPS. (Li, 2005) The use of active treatment modalities (e.g., exercise, education, activity modification) instead of passive treatments is associated with substantially better clinical outcomes. In a large case series of patients with low back pain treated by physical therapists, those adhering to guidelines for active rather than passive treatments incurred fewer treatment visits, cost less, and had less pain and less disability. The overall success rates were 64.7% among those adhering to the active treatment recommendations versus 36.5% for passive treatment. (Fritz, 2007) Physical Medicine Guidelines Allow for fading of treatment frequency (from up to 3 visits per week to 1 or less), plus active self-directed home Physical Medicine. Myalgia and myositis, unspecified (ICD9 729.1): 9-10 visits over 8 weeks Neuralgia, neuritis, and radiculitis, unspecified (ICD9 729.2) 8-10 visits over 4 weeks Reflex sympathetic dystrophy (CRPS) (ICD9 337.2): 24 visits over 16 weeks. According to the documents available for review, the IW has previously undergone multiple sessions of PT without objective, documented functional improvement. Further PT session would be in contrast to the guidelines as set forth in the MTUS. Therefore, at this time, the requirements for treatment have not been met and medical necessity has not been established.