

Case Number:	CM15-0110048		
Date Assigned:	06/26/2015	Date of Injury:	11/01/2008
Decision Date:	07/27/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/20/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/08/2015

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: New Jersey, Alabama, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Neuromuscular 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:

This 63 year old woman sustained an industrial injury on 11/1/2008. The mechanism of injury is not detailed. Evaluations include a recent undated right wrist MRI. Diagnoses include cervical spine strain, lumbar spine disc bulges, right wrist surgery, left carpal tunnel syndrome, and probable bilateral knee internal derangement. Treatment has included oral medications. Physician notes on a PR-2 dated 4/29/2015 show complaints of neck, low back, bilateral hands, bilateral wrist, and bilateral knee pain. Recommendations include physical therapy, pain medicine follow up, psychiatric follow up, orthopedic consultation, surgery consultation, weight loss consultation, and follow up in five weeks.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical therapy for the neck , the low back, both hands and both wrists for 2x6: Upheld

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

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

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, 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)." On May 4, 2015, the patient finished 12 sessions of physical therapy; however, there is no evidence of significant functional improvement, pain relief, and/or reduction in medication usage. There is no documentation as to why the patient cannot perform home exercise. Therefore, the request for 12 physical therapy sessions for the neck, the low back, both hands and both wrists is not medically necessary.