

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0120364		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	06/30/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	07/12/2013
<b>Decision Date:</b>	08/05/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	05/27/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	06/22/2015

### 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: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, 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 38 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on July 12, 2013, incurring right upper extremity injuries. She was diagnosed with right upper extremity complex regional pain syndrome and right carpal tunnel syndrome. Treatment included physical therapy, home exercise program, pain medications, and anti-inflammatory drugs, wrist bracing, nerve blocks and modified work restrictions. Electromyography studies were unremarkable. Currently, the injured worker complained of constant right wrist pain and right elbow pain increased with repetitive movement, tingling in the thumb, index finger and middle finger. She complained of persistent stiffness and weakness with range of motion of the right upper extremity. The treatment plan that was requested for authorization included outpatient physical therapy to the right elbow.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Outpatient physical therapy to the right elbow 3 times a week for 4 weeks: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Duration Guidelines (ODG), Treatment 2015 (web based edition)[Http://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/ch4\\_5sb1a5\\_5\\_2.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/ch4_5sb1a5_5_2.html).

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98-99. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, Elbow Chapter, Physical Medicine.

**Decision rationale:** Regarding the request for physical therapy, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines recommend a short course (10 sessions) of active therapy with continuation of active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement levels. ODG has more specific criteria for the ongoing use of physical therapy. ODG recommends a trial of physical therapy. If the trial of physical therapy results in objective functional improvement, as well as ongoing objective treatment goals, then additional therapy may be considered. Within the documentation available for review, there is no documentation of specific objective functional improvement with any previous sessions and remaining deficits that cannot be addressed within the context of an independent home exercise program yet are expected to improve with formal supervised therapy. Furthermore, the request exceeds the amount of PT recommended by the CA MTUS and, unfortunately, there is no provision for modification of the current request. In light of the above issues, the currently requested physical therapy is not medically necessary.