

Case Number:	CM15-0129225		
Date Assigned:	07/15/2015	Date of Injury:	10/07/2012
Decision Date:	08/11/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/30/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/02/2015

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: Texas, Florida, 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 injured worker is a 41 year old female who sustained a work related injury October 7, 2012. Past history included hypertension. While working as a correctional officer and closing several heavy security doors, she experienced a pop in the radial aspect of her right elbow, followed by pain, swelling, and weakness. She received medication and physical therapy, an MRI of the right elbow, and electrodiagnostic studies. On June 21, 2013, she underwent right elbow surgery to include excision of a neuroma and tenotomy of the mediolateral aspect of the elbow. According to a physician's clinic report dated June 3, 2015, the injured worker presented with complaints of right elbow and biceps pain, rated 5 out of 10. She has been unable to get Flector patches because of non-approval and also unable to take NSAID's (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) because of hypertensive medication. Examination of the right elbow shows the surgical scar. There is full extension and flexion to about -10 and good grip strength, weaker than the left. Assessment is documented as post-operative right elbow pain; exacerbation of extensor tendon. At issue, is the request for authorization for a TEN's (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation) unit.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TEN's unit (indefinite use): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 114-121.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 116 of 127.

Decision rationale: This claimant was injured in 2012 with a pop in the right elbow. On June 21, 2013, she underwent right elbow surgery to include excision of a neuroma and tenotomy of the mediolateral aspect of the elbow. As of June 2015, there is still right elbow and biceps pain, rated 5 out of 10. The assessment is documented as post-operative right elbow pain; exacerbation of extensor tendon. No TENS unit trial with objective, functional benefit is noted. The MTUS notes that TENS is not recommended as a primary treatment modality, but a one-month home-based TENS trial may be considered as a noninvasive conservative option, if used as an adjunct to a program of evidence-based functional restoration, for the conditions described below.

Neuropathic pain: Some evidence (Chong, 2003), including diabetic neuropathy (Spruce, 2002) and post-herpetic neuralgia. (Niv, 2005) Phantom limb pain and CRPS II: Some evidence to support use. (Finsen, 1988) (Lundeberg, 1985) Spasticity: TENS may be a supplement to medical treatment in the management of spasticity in spinal cord injury. (Aydin, 2005) Multiple sclerosis (MS): While TENS does not appear to be effective in reducing spasticity in MS patients it may be useful in treating MS patients with pain and muscle spasm. (Miller, 2007) I did not find in these records that the claimant had these conditions that warranted TENS. Also, an outright purchase is not supported, but a monitored one month trial, to insure there is objective, functional improvement. In the trial, there must be documentation of how often the unit was used, as well as outcomes in terms of pain relief and function; rental would be preferred over purchase during this trial. There was no evidence of such in these records. The request is not medically necessary.