

Case Number:	CM15-0165850		
Date Assigned:	09/03/2015	Date of Injury:	11/01/2013
Decision Date:	11/20/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/14/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/24/2015

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, New York, 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 48-year-old who has filed a claim for chronic forearm and elbow pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of November 1, 2013. In a Utilization Review report dated August 13, 2015, the claims administrator failed to approve a request for a TENS unit purchase. The claims administrator referenced an August 6, 2015 office visit and an associated August 10, 2015 RFA form in its determination. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On February 9, 2015, the applicant was placed off work, on total temporary disability. On March 18, 2015, the applicant was again placed off work, on total temporary disability owing to multifocal complaints of low back and wrist pain. On an RFA form dated August 10, 2015, a TENS unit was apparently endorsed, on a purchase basis. On an associated progress note dated August 6, 2015, the applicant reported diffuse complaints of wrist pain, 5/10. The applicant was using Naprosyn, which was described as helping a little, it was reported. Work restrictions were endorsed, although it was suggested that the applicant was working with said limitations in place. The TENS unit was apparently prescribed on a purchase basis. There was no mention that the applicant had previously employed the device in question on a trial basis. On progress notes of June 11, 2015 and July 2, 2015, it was explicitly stated that the applicant was not working. There was no mention of the applicant is having employed the TENS device in question on a trial basis on those dates.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TENS Unit (purchase) Right wrist: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Transcutaneous electrotherapy.

Decision rationale: No, the request for a TENS unit [purchase] was not medically necessary, medically appropriate, or indicated here. As noted on page 116 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, provision of a TENS unit on a purchase basis should be predicated on evidence of a favorable outcome during an earlier one-month trial of the same, with evidence of beneficial outcomes present in terms of both pain relief and function. Here, however, it appears that the attending provider sought authorization for the TENS unit without having the applicant first undergo a one-month trial of the same. The August 6, 2015 office visit at issue made no mention of the applicant is having previously employed the TENS unit in question on a trial basis. Historical progress notes of June 11, 2015 and July 2, 2015 likewise made no mention of the applicant is having previously employed said TENS unit on a trial basis on those dates. Therefore, the request was not medically necessary.