

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0176539		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/17/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	10/23/2008
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/20/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	08/24/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	09/08/2015

### 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: California, South Carolina

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine, Family Practice

### 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 39 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 10-23-08. Progress report dated 7-22-15 reports continued complaints frequent, severe, sharp, shooting bilateral wrist pain with numbness, tingling and weakness associated with movement, grabbing, grasping, gripping, squeezing, and pushing. Commuting causes worsening pain and numbness in the hands. She reports being in school part time which causes worsening pain and forearm spasm. She cannot drive more than 30 minutes without severe pain. Aquatic therapy is the only therapy that has been helpful in the past. Land therapy increased pain due to weight, suspension in the water is helpful. Objective findings: left wrist range of motion decreased and more painful with flexion 55, extension 55, radial deviation 15, and ulnar deviation 25. The right wrist range of motion is decreases and painful with flexion 55, extension 55, radial deviation 15, and ulnar deviation 25. Diagnoses include: status post right carpal tunnel release in 2010, residuals bilateral wrists status post staged bilateral carpal tunnel releases, and status post left carpal tunnel release in 2010. Plan of care includes: request aquatic therapy 2 times per week for 6 weeks, request psych evaluation and treatment, refill medications; naproxen, omeprazole and tramadol, bilateral cock up braces, and bilateral soft wrist braces with silicon wrist pad. Work status: permanent and stationary. Follow up in 3 months. On 8-24-15, Utilization Review non-certified the request for aquatic therapy 2 times a week for 6 weeks for the bilateral wrists.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Aquatic therapy 2 times a week for 6 weeks for the bilateral wrists: 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): Aquatic therapy, Physical Medicine.

**Decision rationale:** Per the cited CA MTUS guidelines, aqua therapy (including swimming) is an optional form of exercise therapy that is recommended when the injured worker needs reduced weight bearing, such as in extreme obesity. Physical medicine guidelines for general muscle pain recommend 9-10 visits over 8 weeks, or in the case of neuralgia, 8-10 visits over 4 weeks. Per the injured worker's available records, she is status post carpal tunnel releases in 2010, and had previous aquatic therapy with good results. However, it is unclear how many previous physical medicine visits she had for her symptoms, and ultimately, the current number of requested sessions exceeds guidelines. Therefore, aqua therapy 2 times a week for 6 weeks for the bilateral wrists is not medically necessary.