

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0177556		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/18/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	10/17/2014
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/21/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	08/21/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	09/09/2015

### 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, Oregon, Washington  
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Orthopedic Surgery

### 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 55 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 10-17-2014. The medical records indicate that the injured worker is undergoing treatment for left lateral epicondylitis with concomitant radial tunnel syndrome. According to the progress report dated 7-28-2015, the injured worker complains of significant pain in the lateral aspect of the left elbow and forearm, which is made worse with repetitive activity. The level of pain is not rated. The physical examination reveals significant tenderness over the left lateral epicondyle as well as over the area of the radial tunnel distally. She has pain with resisted wrist extension, middle finger extension, and forearm supination. The current medications are oral anti-inflammatories (name unspecified). Treatment to date has included medication management, x-rays, splint, physical therapy, TENS unit, and MRI studies. MRI confirms "common extensor tear". Work status is described as temporary disability until left elbow surgery is done and a further treatment plan is formulated or 9-30-2015. The original utilization review (8-21-2015) partially approved a request for left elbow radial tunnel release (original request was for left lateral epicondyle debridement with concomitant radial tunnel release).

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Left elbow radial tunnel release:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Elbow Complaints 2007.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Elbow (Acute and chronic), Surgery for radial tunnel syndrome (lesion of radial nerve).

**Decision rationale:** CA MTUS/ACOEM is silent on the issue of radial tunnel surgery. Per the ODG, Elbow (Acute and chronic), Surgery for radial tunnel syndrome (lesion of radial nerve), recommended as an option in simple cases after 3-6 months of conservative care plus positive electrodiagnostic studies and objective evidence of loss of function. Surgical decompression of radial tunnel syndrome (RTS), a relatively rare condition, remains controversial because the results are unpredictable. Surgical decompression may be beneficial for simple RTS, but may be less successful if there are coexisting additional nerve compression syndromes or lateral epicondylitis or if the patient is receiving workers' compensation. In this case there is insufficient evidence in the records of failure of 3-6 months of conservative care and evidence by electrodiagnostic studies to warrant surgical care. Therefore the determination is for non-certification. The request is not medically necessary.