

Case Number:	CM15-0065752		
Date Assigned:	04/13/2015	Date of Injury:	07/11/2013
Decision Date:	05/20/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/23/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/07/2015

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: New York

Certification(s)/Specialty: Podiatrist

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 male, who sustained an industrial injury on 7/11/13. He reported pain in the left foot. The injured worker was diagnosed as having status post traumatic neuromas left foot. Treatment to date has included pain medications and surgery. As of the PR2 dated 3/20/15, the injured worker reports continued left foot pain. He rated his pain 6/10. The treating physician noted severe pain in the left foot involving the plantar digital nerve. The injured worker limps off the left foot because of neuritic symptoms radiating into the ball of his foot. The treating physician requested a plantar nerve release of the left foot and a post-operative shoe.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Release of the plantar nerve left foot: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 14 Ankle and Foot Complaints Page(s): 374.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 14 Ankle and Foot Complaints Page(s): 374.

Decision rationale: After careful review of the enclosed medical information it appears that this patient has undergone to surgical procedures to the left forefoot to alleviate neuroma pain. Patient continues, as of 2015, to suffer with left forefoot pain. A local steroid injection to the symptomatic left foot has not alleviated patient's pain. A diagnosis of neuritis to the plantar digital nerve left foot was made. The surgeon is proposing a release of the plantar digital nerve left side. MTUS guidelines state that: A referral for surgical consultation may be indicated for patients who have: Activity limitation for more than one month without signs of functional improvement; Failure of exercise programs to increase range of motion and strength of the musculature around the ankle and foot; Clear clinical and imaging evidence of a lesion that has been shown to benefit in both the short and long term from surgical repair. It is well-documented that this patient has already undergone two surgical procedures to the painful neuroma area left foot. It is questionable as to whether a third surgery to the same area would help alleviate patient's pain. Most importantly however, there is no clear clinical imaging to demonstrate a lesion or neuroma to this area. An MRI may shed some light as to whether there is indeed a stump neuroma and or just painful scar tissue to the forefoot inner space. For this reason I do not feel that a third surgical procedure to this area is reasonable. Therefore is not medically necessary.

Post Operative Shoe: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Knee Chapter, Walking Aid.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 14 Ankle and Foot Complaints Page(s): 374.

Decision rationale: After careful review of the enclosed medical information it appears that this patient has undergone to surgical procedures to the left forefoot to alleviate neuroma pain. Patient continues, as of 2015, to suffer with left forefoot pain. A local steroid injection to the symptomatic left foot has not alleviated patient's pain. A diagnosis of neuritis to the plantar digital nerve left foot was made. The surgeon is proposing a release of the plantar digital nerve left side. MTUS guidelines state that: A referral for surgical consultation may be indicated for patients who have: Activity limitation for more than one month without signs of functional improvement; Failure of exercise programs to increase range of motion and strength of the musculature around the ankle and foot; Clear clinical and imaging evidence of a lesion that has been shown to benefit in both the short and long term from surgical repair. It is well-documented that this patient has already undergone two surgical procedures to the painful neuroma area left foot. It is questionable as to whether a third surgery to the same area would help alleviate patient's pain. Most importantly however, there is no clear clinical imaging to demonstrate a lesion or neuroma to this area. An MRI may shed some light as to whether there is indeed a stump neuroma and or just painful scar tissue to the forefoot inner space. For this reason I do not feel that a third surgical procedure to this area is reasonable. Because the surgery to the left foot cannot be recommended, a post operative shoe is not needed and cannot be recommended. Therefore is not medically necessary.