MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM15-0068053		
Date Assigned:	04/15/2015	Date of Injury:	01/30/2002
Decision Date:	05/14/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/06/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/09/2015

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
Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This 60-year-old male sustained an industrial injury on 1/30/02. Previous treatment included aquatic therapy, rest and medications. The injured worker was currently being treated for chronic groin and low back pain from his hernia. In a visit note dated 2/24/15, the injured worker complained of persistent groin pain and slightly worse low back. The injured worker was requesting aquatic therapy. The injured worker reported sleeplessness that had been improved in the past with aquatic therapy. Current diagnoses included ilioinguinal neuralgia, mononeuritis of lower limb, right lower quadrant abdominal pain, chronic kidney disease, hypertension, long term use of medications, congestive heart failure and depression. The treatment plan included 12 sessions of aquatic therapy and medications (Cialis and Butrans).

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Aquatic Therapy, 12 sessions, for Hernia: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Aquatic therapy Page(s): 22.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Therapy, pages 98-99.

Decision rationale: Aquatic Therapy does not seem appropriate, as the patient has received land-based Physical therapy. There is no records indicating intolerance of treatment, incapable of making same gains with land-based program nor is there any medical diagnosis or indication to require Aqua therapy at this time. The patient is not status-post recent lumbar or knee surgery nor is there diagnosis of morbid obesity requiring gentle aquatic rehabilitation with passive modalities and should have the knowledge to continue with functional improvement with a Home exercise program. The patient has completed formal sessions of PT and there is nothing submitted to indicate functional improvement from treatment already rendered. There is no report of new acute injuries that would require a change in the functional restoration program. There is no report of acute flare-up and the patient has been instructed on a home exercise program for this injury. Per Guidelines, physical therapy is considered medically necessary when the services require the judgment, knowledge, and skills of a qualified physical therapist due to the complexity and sophistication of the therapy and the physical condition of the patient. However, there is no clear measurable evidence of progress with the PT treatment already rendered including milestones of increased ROM, strength, and functional capacity. Review of submitted physician reports show no evidence of functional benefit, unchanged chronic symptom complaints, clinical findings, and work status. There is no evidence documenting functional baseline with clear goals to be reached and the patient striving to reach those goals. The Chronic Pain Guidelines allow for visits of physical therapy with fading of treatment to an independent self-directed home program. Submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication to support for the pool therapy. The Aquatic Therapy, 12 sessions, for Hernia is not medically necessary and appropriate.