

Case Number:	CM15-0068806		
Date Assigned:	04/16/2015	Date of Injury:	06/24/2013
Decision Date:	05/15/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/27/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/10/2015

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, Pain Management

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 31 year old female with an industrial injury dated 06/24/2013. Her diagnoses include bilateral upper extremity multi-focal pain and carpal tunnel syndrome. Prior treatment consists of hand therapy, and medications. She presents on 12/01/2014 (most current record available) with complaints of bilateral hand and elbow pain. Physical examination showed normal bilateral elbow, forearm, wrist, thumb and finger ranges of motion. Palpation shows diffuse tenderness of upper extremities, wrists and hands. Treatment plan included physical therapy.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Hand Physical Therapy for Bilateral Wrist 2 times a week for 6 weeks: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 3 Initial Approaches to Treatment.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints Page(s): 265. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Carpal Tunnel Syndrome Chapter, Physical medicine treatment.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for additional physical therapy, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines recommend a short course of active therapy with continuation of active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement levels. ODG has more specific criteria for the ongoing use of physical therapy. ODG recommends a trial of physical therapy. If the trial of physical therapy results in objective functional improvement, as well as ongoing objective treatment goals, then additional therapy may be considered. ODG recommends 1-3 visits for medical treatment of CTS. Within the documentation available for review, there is documentation of completion of prior PT sessions, but there is no documentation of specific objective functional improvement with the previous sessions and remaining deficits that cannot be addressed within the context of an independent home exercise program, yet are expected to improve with formal supervised therapy. Furthermore, when added to the previously provided therapy, the request exceeds the amount of PT recommended by the ODG for this patient's diagnoses and, unfortunately, there is no provision for modification of the current request. In light of the above issues, the currently requested additional physical therapy is not medically necessary.