

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0092001		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	05/18/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	10/08/2013
<b>Decision Date:</b>	06/17/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	05/01/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	05/13/2015

### 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 is a 36 year old male with an October 8, 2013 date of injury. A progress note dated April 15, 2015 documents subjective findings (ongoing pain and numbness in the base of the right thumb and thenar prominence; difficulty with activities of daily living; difficulty with gripping and grasping; pain rated at a level of 7/10; pain in the right wrist), objective findings (tenderness to palpation and a well-healed surgical scar at the base of the right thumb; thenar eminence atrophy with some vasomotor changes; positive Finkelstein's test; tenderness of the left lateral epicondyle worse with flexion and extension of the wrist or flexion of the elbow; significant tenderness at the base of the left thumb), and current diagnoses (bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome; bilateral ulnar nerve entrapment at the elbow; reactionary depression/anxiety; medication- induced gastritis). Treatments to date have included diagnostic injection (minimal benefit), right De Quervain's release, removal of right ganglion cyst, splinting, physical therapy, acupuncture, magnetic resonance arthrogram of the right wrist (June 3, 2014; showed findings compatible with the partial tear or sprain of the scapholunate ligament), electromyogram of the upper extremities (July 11, 2014; showed bilateral ulnar neuropathy across the elbows with slowing of the bilateral ulnar motor nerves, and carpal tunnel syndrome), and medications. The treating physician documented a plan of care that included physical therapy for the right hand.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Physical therapy for the right hand QTY: 12.00:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Guidelines Page(s): 99.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Therapy Page(s): s 98-99.

**Decision rationale:** 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 functional 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. It appears the employee has received significant therapy sessions without demonstrated evidence of functional improvement to allow for additional therapy treatments. There is no report of acute flare-up, new injuries, or change in symptom or clinical findings to support for formal PT in a patient that has been instructed on a home exercise program for this chronic injury. Submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication to support further physical therapy when prior treatment rendered has not resulted in any functional benefit. The physical therapy for the right hand QTY: 12.00 are not medically necessary and appropriate.