

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0095069		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	05/21/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	08/01/1997
<b>Decision Date:</b>	06/24/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	05/05/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	05/18/2015

### 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:

The injured worker is a 69 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 8/1/97. The injured worker has complaints of low back and left leg pain. The documentation noted cervical spine tenderness, decreased flexion, decreased extension, decreased rotation, decreased left lateral bending and decreased right lateral bending. The diagnoses have included lumbago, low back pain; reflex sympathetic dystrophy lower limb; ankle pain, joint and knee pain/joint pain leg. Treatment to date has included right knee X-ray was positive for arthritis; physical therapy; Nexium; Norco; Topamax; Effexor XR and Oxycontin. The request was for Eighteen (18) physical therapy sessions.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Eighteen (18) physical therapy sessions:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 9 Shoulder Complaints Page(s): 203. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Shoulder (Acute & Chronic); Physical Therapy.

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

**Decision rationale:** Review indicates the patient underwent shoulder arthroplasty on 3/31/14, over a year ago with 18 post-op PT visits and subsequent additional therapy including aquatic therapy of at least 32 total sessions. 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 Eighteen (18) physical therapy sessions is not medically necessary and appropriate.