

Case Number:	CM14-0156485		
Date Assigned:	09/26/2014	Date of Injury:	02/15/2013
Decision Date:	11/07/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/04/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/24/2014

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. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, has a subspecialty in Interventional Spine and is licensed to practice in California. 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

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 patient is a 56-year-old female with a date of injury of 02/15/2013. The listed diagnoses are: 1. Right distal radius close intraarticular fracture. 2. Bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome. 3. Bilateral cubital tunnel syndrome. According to progress report 08/21/2014, the patient presents with right wrist and forearm pain with bilateral hand numbness. Examination revealed positive Tinel's sign over the cubital tunnel and elbow flexion test is positive. Tinel's and Phalen's are both positive in the median nerve at the wrist/hand. Examination of the right elbow/hand revealed mild swelling, decreased range of motion, neurovascular intact distally except decreased over median and ulnar nerve distributions. Medical records indicate the patient underwent right carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) on 07/18/2014, x-ray of the right wrist on 02/15/2013, x-ray of the right forearm on 02/15/2013, and an electromyography (EMG)/nerve conduction velocity (NCV) on 12/13/2013. The treater is requesting additional postoperative physical therapy 2 times a week for 4 weeks for the right wrist. Utilization review denied the request on 09/04/2014. Treatment reports from 04/10/2014 through 08/21/2014 were reviewed.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical therapy 2 times a week for 4 weeks, right wrist: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 15.

Decision rationale: This patient is status post carpal tunnel release on 07/18/2014 and continues with bilateral elbow, wrist, and hand pain. The treater is requesting additional physical therapy 2 times a week for 4 weeks. For carpal tunnel syndrome, the MTUS Postsurgical Guidelines page 15 allow for 3 to 8 sessions over 3 to 5 weeks. Physical therapy progress report from 08/12/2013 notes that the patient has completed 29 sessions. Progress reports 07/24/2014 states that the patient has had 8 post-operative therapy sessions and continues to report soreness in the right wrist and right elbow. It appears the patient has cumulatively completed 29 physical therapy sessions and 8 postoperative sessions following the right CTS on 07/18/2014. Review of physical therapy progress reports indicates the patient is progressing towards goal with some improvement but does have residual symptoms. In this case, the treater's request for additional 8 post op sessions with the 8 sessions already received exceeds what is recommended by MTUS. Furthermore, the treater does not discuss why the patient would not be able to transition into a self-directed home exercise program. The request is not medically necessary and appropriate.