MAXIMUS Federal Services

| Case Number: | CM13-0040572 | | |
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| Date Assigned: | 12/20/2013 | Date of Injury: | 08/27/2006 |
| Decision Date: | 05/15/2014 | UR Denial Date: | 10/15/2013 |
| Priority: | Standard | Application Received: | 10/29/2013 |

## 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 Orthopedic Surgery, and is licensed to practice in Pennsylvania. 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:

This is a 62-year-old gentleman who was injured in a work-related accident on 08/27/06. The most recent clinical assessment for review is an August 19, 2013 progress report by [redacted] where he described bilateral knee arthritis. According to the progress report on July 8, 2013 Synvisc-One injections were performed bilaterally. [redacted] noted that the claimant continued to use Vicodin for intermittent relief of pain but did demonstrate noticeable improvement from the viscosupplementation injections and recommended continued management with Synvisc-One with a six-month follow-up. Physical examination showed bilateral flexion contractures with motion to 130 degrees and no other findings. The diagnosis was bilateral knee degenerative change. There was an October 16, 2013 recommendation for treatment in the form of bilateral Synvisc-One injections as well as bilateral total knee arthroplasty procedures. Further clinical records or documentation of physical examination findings were not available for review.

## IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**SYNVISC ONE X 2 FOR BILATERAL KNEES:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guideline, Knee Chapter, criteria for Hyaluronic Acid or Hylan, and Evanich, J David et. al, Clinical Orthopedics & Related Research, (390):173-181, September 2001.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG,) Treatment in Worker's Comp, 18th Edition, 2013 Updates: knee procedure: Hyaluronic acid injections.

**Decision rationale:** The CA MTUS guidelines are silent. When looking at the Official Disability Guidelines, bilateral Synvisc-One injections cannot be supported. The claimant received his last Synvisc-One injections in July 2013 and the request for additional injections was made in October 2013. This time frame is clearly less than six months from the time of last injection. There is no documentation that the claimant experienced six months of relief. The specific request for the bilateral repeat injections would thus not be indicated at the time requested.

**TOTAL KNEE REPLACEMENTS FOR BILATERAL KNEES:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disabilities Guideline (ODG), Knee and Leg Chapter, Indications for Surgery- Knee Arthroplasty.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Treatment in Worker's Comp, 18th Edition, 2013 Updates: knee procedure - Knee joint replacement.

**Decision rationale:** The CA MTUS guidelines are silent. When looking at Official Disability Guidelines, bilateral total joint replacement procedures would also not be indicated. While knee replacement procedures and viscosupplementation are being requested, the claimant's last clinical assessment was in August 2013 where he was doing quite well following viscosupplementation injections. There is also no documentation of recent imaging or subjective clinical complaints that would support the role of the surgical process. The absence of recent documentation of examination findings, clinical imaging, and conservative care would fail to necessitate the role of bilateral arthroplasty procedures as requested.