

Case Number:	CM13-0045319		
Date Assigned:	12/27/2013	Date of Injury:	12/04/2011
Decision Date:	04/24/2014	UR Denial Date:	11/04/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/12/2013

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 Internal Medicine and Emergency Medicine, and is licensed to practice in Florida. 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 patient is a 53 year-old with a date of injury of 12/4/11. A progress report associated with the request for services, dated 10/11/13, identified subjective complaints of a pending left knee replacment and a weight of 315 pounds. This was ascribed to the type of foods that he eats. Objective findings included tenderness of the lumbar spine and left knee and ankle. Diagnoses included lumbar stenosis and osteoarthritis of the left knee and ankle. Treatment has included oral opioid analgesics. His weight was down from 350 pounds, but still above his goal weight of 280 pounds to proceed with knee replacment.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TEN (10) WEEK WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAM: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Snow V, Barry P, Fitterman N, Qazeem A, Weiss K. Pharmacologic and surgical management of obesity in primary care: a clinical practice guideline from the American College of Physicians. Ann Intern Med 2005 Apr 5;142(7):525-31.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation UpToDate: Overview of Therapy for Obesity in Adults.

Decision rationale: Neither the MTUS nor the Official Disability Guidelines address obesity or weight loss programs. Dietary therapy and counseling are recognized forms of therapy for weight loss. In this case, the claimant previously participated in a weight loss program with some success. Further, there is a specific goal in order to qualify for surgery. Therefore, the record documents the medical necessity for an additional 10 weeks of a weight loss program. The request is certified.

UNKNOWN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PURCHASE OF APPROPRIATE FOODS: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Snow V, Barry P, Fitterman N, Qazeem A, Weiss K. Pharmacologic and surgical management of obesity in primary care: a clinical practice guideline from the American College of Physicians. Ann Intern Med 2005 Apr 5;142(7):525-31.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Guidelines for Utilization Review

Decision rationale: Neither the MTUS nor the Official Disability Guidelines address specific diets or financial assistance to participate in special diets. The non-certification was based upon financial assistance not being a medical issue, and therefore not within the scope of utilization review. Additionally, there is no specific request for the type or amount of assistance. Therefore, there is no documented medical necessity for unknown financial assistance to purchase special foods. The request is noncertified.