

Case Number:	CM14-0010145		
Date Assigned:	02/21/2014	Date of Injury:	09/20/2011
Decision Date:	06/25/2014	UR Denial Date:	12/23/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/24/2014

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 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 70 year-old with a date of injury of September 20, 2011. A progress report associated with the request for services, dated November 4, 2013, identified subjective complaints of knee pain. Objective findings included tenderness and swelling with decreased range-of-motion. MRI showed degenerative disease of the knee. Diagnoses included arthritis of the knee. Treatment has included intra-articular steroid injection. She had Synvisc injected into the left knee in May of 2013. She received an NSAID (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs)for some period of time in July. A Utilization Review determination was rendered on December 23, 2013 recommending non-certification of "left knee Synvisc injection 6ml (48mg)".

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

LEFT KNEE SYNVISIC INJECTION 6ML (48MG): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines Knee & Leg.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Knee, Hyaluronic Acid Injections

Decision rationale: The current request is for Synvisc injections for therapy of patellofemoral chondromalacia of the knee. The California MTUS Chronic Pain Guidelines do not address viscosupplementation (hyaluronic acid injections). The Official Disability Guidelines note that hyaluronic acid injections are indicated for symptomatic osteoarthritis that has not responded to conservative management. However, the ODG notes that it is not recommended for other indications such as patellofemoral arthritis or patellofemoral chondromalacia. Even related to osteoarthritis of the knee, it further states: "...in recent quality studies the magnitude of improvement appears modest at best." Criteria for injection include: - Symptomatic osteoarthritis that has not responded to conservative management (exercise and medication) for at least 3 months. - Documented severe osteoarthritis of the knee, which may include crepitus, bony enlargement, and over 50 years of age. - Pain interferes with functional activities (ambulation, prolonged standing). - Failure to adequately respond to aspiration and injection of intra-articular steroids. - Generally performed without fluoroscopic or ultrasound guidance. - Are not currently candidates for total knee replacement or who have failed previous knee surgery for their arthritis, unless younger patients wanting to delay total knee replacement. - If documented significant improvement in symptoms for 6 months or more, and symptoms recur, may be reasonable to do another series. - Not indicated for patellofemoral arthritis or syndrome, or other joints than the knee. In this case, the claimant does not meet the criteria above. Specifically, the visit lacked documentation of three months of exercise and pharmacologic management. Physical findings on previous visits were focal to the patellofemoral region. Likewise, she was described as a candidate for total knee replacement in the future. The request for left knee synvisc injection 6ml (48mg) is not medically necessary or appropriate.