

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0128868		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	08/18/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	02/06/2008
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/01/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	08/04/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	08/13/2014

### 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 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 injured worker is a 46-year-old female with a reported date of injury on 02/06/2008. The mechanism of injury was due to a fall. Her diagnoses were noted to include internal derangement of the right knee; status post 2 previous meniscectomies with grade 2 and grade 3 chondromalacia along the medial femoral condyle; patellar joint, as well as moderate tricompartmental arthritis by MRI and complex degenerative tear of the posterior horn of the medial meniscus and trace joint effusion; status post arthroscopy of the right knee; synovectomy; chondroplasty; and meniscectomy. Her previous treatments were noted to include physical therapy, hyalgan injections, cortisone injections, and medications. The progress note dated 04/11/2014 revealed complaints on pain along the left knee and the provider was waiting for an unloading brace. The injured worker reported she difficulty with any prolonged standing or walking, as well as sitting. The injured worker also had quite a bit of swelling. The physical examination revealed tenderness along the right knee, as well as the left knee. There was swelling present bilaterally and an antalgic gait. The range of motion to the bilateral knees was decreased. The Request for Authorization form dated 04/14/2014 was for an unloading brace for the right knee as the injured worker has had a complete loss of articular surface.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Unloading Brace for Right Knee:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines-Knee and Leg; Unloader Braces for the Knee

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints  
Page(s): 346.

**Decision rationale:** The injured worker complained of pain along the left knee and had difficulty with prolonged standing or walking, as well as sitting with quite a bit of swelling. The CA MTUS/ACOEM guidelines state functional bracing is optional as part of a rehabilitation program. A brace can be used for patellar instability, anterior cruciate ligament tear, or medial collateral ligament instability, although its benefits may be more emotional than medical. Usually a brace is necessary only if the patient is going to be stressing the knee under load, like climbing ladders or carrying boxes. For the average patient, using a brace is usually unnecessary. In all cases, braces need to be properly fitted and combined with rehabilitation program. There is a lack of clinical findings consistent with instability or of the injured worker to be utilizing the brace (combined with a rehabilitation program). Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.