MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM14-0151855		
Date Assigned:	09/19/2014	Date of Injury:	08/30/2013
Decision Date:	10/21/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/29/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/17/2014

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 Occupational Medicine 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:

According to the provided documents is a 41-year-old man with a date of injury of 8/30/13. Originally this appears to have been to the elbow, then later to his knee. The disputed treatment is Euflexxa medication kit and injections into the left knee. This is a brand name for a type of hyaluronic acid injection, (also known as viscosupplementation) into the knee. The visit on 7/18/14 states that he was having ongoing pain in the left knee and a cortisone injection was given. There is an 8/15/14 orthopedic report that states that the patient had a left knee injury as well as left elbow and left hand problems. The patient stated the knee had been hurting continuously since then. He had been returned to work to a different place doing modified duty following the corticosteroid injection. He was complaining of the left knee giving way. Exam showed retropatellar tenderness, crepitation and tenderness in the medial joint line of the left knee. The knee related diagnoses were chondromalacia of the left knee, and contusion of the left knee. The trial of Eufflexxa injections was recommended. There was a 3/4/14 MRI of the left knee which, among other findings, included mild chondromalacia changes in the medial femoral condyle was noted. A 2/11/14 narrative orthopedic report indicated that the patient had completed physical therapy (PT) for the knee and that his knee was giving way such that he had almost fallen. Patient was TTD at that time and a left knee MRI was going to be obtained.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Euflexxa medication kit and injections for the left knee QTY 3.00: Upheld

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

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: MTUS guidelines are silent on this type of injection. ODG recommends them as a possible option for severe osteoarthritis for patients who have not responded adequately to recommended conservative treatments, and to potentially delay total knee replacement. This is a gentleman who has MRI evidence of mild chondromalacia of the medial femoral condyle which is essentially early osteoarthritis showing wearing down of the cartilage lining of the joint. There is no mention of any weight-bearing radiographs showing severe loss of joint space or joint space narrowing which would be evidence for more severe knee osteoarthritis. There is no indication whatsoever that this patient would be a candidate for a total knee replacement. Overall, this clinical presentation, based upon the evidence and the guidelines does not support the medical necessity for the Euflexxa injections or the Euflexxa kit.