

Case Number:	CM14-0157594		
Date Assigned:	09/30/2014	Date of Injury:	12/22/2011
Decision Date:	10/29/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/22/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/25/2014

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 General Surgery and is licensed to practice in California and Nevada. 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 38 year old male was injured 12/22/11. A progress note dated 9/10/14, notes that the patient is wearing a brace because of insecurity, he complained of pain laterally and medially, a chronic limp, and difficulty with ambulation, activities of daily living, instability of the knee with increased varus and valgus, and tenderness along the joint line. Weight bearing films demonstrated valgus alignment, osteophytes laterally and somewhat bone-on-bone. Patient obese and has an elevated blood sugar. Arthroscopic surgery had already been done with both partial medial and lateral meniscectomy in 2012. He derived no benefit. He had had prior injury and arthroscopic repair of the anterior cruciate ligament. Identified also was chondromalacia patella. There are degenerative changes in both medial and lateral compartments. The patient is morbidly obese with a BMI of 38.5.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Right Total Knee Arthroplasty: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Knee joint replacement; Knee arthroplasty

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Treatment Index, 5th Edition, 2007, Knee-Joint replacement.

Decision rationale: The patient is a diabetic. Therefore, steroid injections are contraindicated. Viscosupplementation may result in temporary relief but unlikely to be permanent. He would still have a misaligned knee and the bone spurs. The same condition would continue to exist following a 50 to 75 pound weight loss. However, a trial of viscosupplementation would not be an added risk and the morbidly obese would be a major risk to success post total knee arthroplasty. According to the guidelines, "Criteria for knee joint replacement: 1. Conservative Care: Medications. OR Visco supplementation injections. OR Steroid injection. PLUS 2. Subjective Clinical Findings: Limited range of motion. OR Night-time joint pain. OR No pain relief with conservative care. PLUS 3. Objective Clinical Findings: Over 50 years of age AND Body Mass Index of less than 35." Therefore, the request for a right knee total arthroplasty is not medically necessary or appropriate.

Post-op physical therapy of 2-3 x week for 4-6 weeks: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Knee joint replacement; Knee Arthroplasty

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Since the primary procedure is not medically necessary, none of the associated services are medically necessary.