

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0172081		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	10/23/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	07/20/2010
<b>Decision Date:</b>	11/21/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	10/08/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	10/17/2014

### 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 Orthopedic Surgery 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 records made available for review, this is a 29-year-old female with a 7/20/10 date of injury, and L4-5 laminotomy with microdiscectomy on 10/3/14. At the time (9/25/14) of request for authorization for associated surgical service: twelve (12) pre-operative physical therapy sessions 2 times a week for 6 weeks for the left knee, there is documentation of subjective (left knee pain) and objective (no significant effusion, no crepitanace, stable lateral, medial, and posterior cruciate ligaments, unable to tolerate pivot shift test, positive McMurray's sign) findings, current diagnoses (medial meniscus tear, osteochondral defect, and anterior cruciate ligament tear of the left knee), and treatment to date (medications, cortisone injection, and previous physical therapy treatments). The number of previous physical therapy sessions cannot be determined. There is no documentation of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications as a result of physical therapy provided to date.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

#### **12 Pre-Operative Physical Therapy Sessions 2 Times a Week for 6 Weeks for The Left Knee: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints Page(s): 343-344 and 340, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 98-99.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Knee & Leg, Physical Therapy Title 8, California Code of Regulations

**Decision rationale:** MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines support a brief course of physical medicine for patients with chronic pain not to exceed 10 visits over 4-8 weeks with allowance for fading of treatment frequency, with transition to an active self-directed program of independent home physical medicine/therapeutic exercise. MTUS-Definitions identifies that any treatment intervention should not be continued in the absence of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services. ODG recommends a limited course of physical therapy for patients with a diagnosis of ACL tear not to exceed 12 visits over 8 weeks. ODG also notes patients should be formally assessed after a "six-visit clinical trial" to see if the patient is moving in a positive direction, no direction, or a negative direction (prior to continuing with the physical therapy) and when treatment requests exceeds guideline recommendations, the physician must provide a statement of exceptional factors to justify going outside of guideline parameters. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of medial meniscus tear, osteochondral defect, and anterior cruciate ligament tear of the left knee. In addition, there is documentation of previous physical therapy treatments. Furthermore, given documentation of subjective (left knee pain) and objective (unable to tolerate pivot shift test and positive McMurray's sign) findings, there is documentation of functional deficits and functional goals. However, there is no documentation of the number of previous physical therapy sessions and, if the number of treatments have exceeded guidelines, remaining functional deficits that would be considered exceptional factors to justify exceeding guidelines. In addition, there is no documentation of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications as a result of physical therapy provided to date. Based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for 12 Pre-Operative Physical Therapy Sessions 2 Times a Week for 6 Weeks for The Left Knee is not medically necessary.