

Case Number:	CM14-0179063		
Date Assigned:	11/03/2014	Date of Injury:	12/31/1994
Decision Date:	12/12/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/09/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/28/2014

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:

The patient is a 68-year-old male who has submitted a claim for degenerative joint disease of knee status post replacement, suprapatellar and infrapatellar knee bursitis, and chronic pain syndrome associated with an industrial injury date of 12/31/1994. Medical records from 2014 were reviewed. The patient complained of persistent bilateral knee pain despite replacement surgery. He had been doing a home exercise program, which included swimming four times per week. Physical examination showed +1 lower extremity reflexes. Hip flexors and knee extensors were rated 4/5. Edema was noted at both knees. Tenderness was present at suprapatellar and infrapatellar bursa. Treatment to date has included bilateral knee replacement in 2000 and 2003, physical therapy, home exercise program, and medications. The present request for a gym membership program is to provide a swimming area for the patient where he can maintain right knee joint functionality and mobility. The utilization review from 10/9/2014 denied the request for gym membership x 3 months because there was no evidence from the literature that gym memberships had better outcomes when compared to an independent home exercise program.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

A three month gym membership: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 96. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG)

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Low Back Chapter, Gym Memberships

Decision rationale: The CA MTUS does not address this topic specifically. Per the Strength of Evidence hierarchy established by the California Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Workers' Compensation, the Official Disability Guidelines, (ODG), Low Back Chapter, Gym Membership was used instead. It states that gym memberships are not recommended as a medical prescription unless the documented home exercise program has been ineffective and there is a need for specialized equipment; treatment needs to be monitored and administered by medical professionals. In this case, the patient complained of persistent bilateral knee pain despite replacement surgery. He had been doing a home exercise program, which included swimming four times per week. Physical examination showed +1 lower extremity reflexes. Hip flexors and knee extensors were rated 4/5. Edema was noted at both knees. Tenderness was present at suprapatellar and infrapatellar bursa. The present request for a gym membership program is to provide a swimming area for the patient where he can maintain right knee joint functionality and mobility. However, there was no discussion whether treatment will be monitored or administered by a health professional. Moreover, it is unclear why an independent land-based home exercise program cannot suffice instead. The medical necessity cannot be established due to insufficient information. Therefore, the request for three month gym membership is not medically necessary.