

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0038924		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	06/27/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	11/25/2007
<b>Decision Date:</b>	09/05/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	03/28/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	04/02/2014

### 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. 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 applicant is a represented [REDACTED] employee who has filed a claim for chronic knee pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of November 25, 2007. Thus far, the applicant has been treated with the following: Analgesic medications; attorney representations; transfer of care to and from various providers in various specialties; earlier knee arthroscopy on July 25, 2008; MRI imaging of the knee of May 16, 2013, notable for articular cartilage degeneration and thinning of multiple compartments suggestive of knee arthritis; and earlier viscosupplementation injections in 2012 and 2013. In a Utilization Review Report dated March 28, 2014 the claims administrator denied a request for Hyalgan (viscosupplementation) injections. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On January 24, 2014, it was noted that the applicant had persistent mental health issues requiring usage of Pristiq, Wellbutrin, and Ativan. The applicant was having intermittent panic attacks, it was acknowledged. On October 25, 2013, the applicant's psychiatrist stated that the applicant was incapable of any kind of gainful employment. The remainder of the file was surveyed. It appeared that all of the provided progress notes represented mental health progress notes. No medical progress note outlining the state of the applicant's knee issues and knee complaints was outlined with the exception of an earlier psychiatric intake report dated January 11, 2012, in which the applicant presented with complaints of major depression, chronic knee pain, and chronic neck pain. There was no discussion of the applicant's response to earlier viscosupplementation injections.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

### **Five (5) Hyalgan Injections to the Right Knee.: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Knee and Leg (updated 01/20/2014) Hyaluronic acid injections.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence.

**Decision rationale:** The MTUS does not address the topic. While the Third Edition ACOEM Guidelines do endorse intra-articular knee viscosupplementation injections in the treatment of moderate to severe knee Osteoarthritis, as it appears to be present here. ACOEM does qualify the recommendation by noting that indications for discontinuation include evidence of adverse effects with earlier blocks or if the clinical results resulted in a significant reduction in resolution of symptoms. In this case, no medical progress notes were attached to the request for authorization or application for Independent Medical Review so as to determine whether or not the applicant had responded favorably to the earlier viscosupplementation injections or developed adverse effects with the same. The bulk of the information on file comprised of psychiatric progress notes, none of which outlined the applicant's response to earlier viscosupplementation injections. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.

### **Hyalgan or Supartz, for intra-articular injection.: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Knee and Leg (updated 01/20/2014) Hyaluronic acid injections.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guidelines or Medical Evidence: ACOEM Practice Guidelines, Third Edition, Knee Chapter, Injections section.

**Decision rationale:** The MTUS does not address the topic. While the Third Edition ACOEM Guidelines do support viscosupplementation (aka Hyalgan-Supartz) injections in the treatment of moderate to severe knee Osteoarthritis, as appears to be present here. ACOEM qualifies the recommendation by noting that repeat injections are generally not recommended if there are adverse effects with earlier injections or the clinical results suggest significant reduction in or complete resolution of symptoms. In this case, no recent medical progress notes were furnished so as to describe the applicant's response to the earlier viscosupplementation injections. The bulk of the progress notes provided were psychiatric progress notes. None of these progress notes outlined the applicant's earlier response to viscosupplementation injections. The state of the applicant's knee arthritis was not clearly outlined immediately prior to the date of the Utilization Review Report, March 28, 2014. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.

