

Case Number:	CM14-0064849		
Date Assigned:	07/11/2014	Date of Injury:	12/17/2013
Decision Date:	09/17/2014	UR Denial Date:	04/18/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/07/2014

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 applicant is a represented [REDACTED] employee who has filed a claim for knee pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of December 17, 2013. Thus far, the applicant has been treated with the following: Analgesic medications; attorney representation; transfer of care to and from various providers in various specialties; unspecified amounts of physical therapy; unspecified amounts of manipulative therapy; and MRI imaging of the knee dated December 23, 2013, apparently notable for significant arthritic changes about the knee. In a Utilization Review Report dated April 16, 2014, the claims administrator denied a request for a series of five viscosupplementation injections because the applicant had had recent viscosupplementation injections within the preceding six months. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. In a progress note dated June 20, 2014, the applicant reported multifocal neck, low back, shoulder, elbow, bilateral knee, and bilateral hip pain. The applicant was described as having tricompartmental bilateral knee arthritis, left greater than right. A neurology consultation, physical therapy, chiropractic manipulative therapy, topical agents, Prilosec, Motrin, and a TENS unit trial were endorsed while the applicant was placed off work, on total temporary disability. On April 26, 2014, the attending provider appealed an earlier denial for viscosupplementation injections for severe left knee arthritis. The applicant was again placed off of work while several medications were refilled, including Motrin. On March 30, 2014, the attending provider initially requested the viscosupplementation injection in question. One viscosupplementation injection was performed on February 6, 2014.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Five Supartz injections for the left knee: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Knee and Leg.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ACOEM V.3, Knee, Specific Diagnoses, Knee Pain and Osteoarthritis, injections.

Decision rationale: According to the Third Edition ACOEM Guidelines Knee Chapter, viscosupplementation injections are indicated in the treatment of moderate-to-severe knee arthritis, as is present here. In this case, the applicant has clinically-evident, radiographically-confirmed knee arthritis, severe, which has proven recalcitrant to conservative treatment such as time, medications, topical agents, etc. There are significant symptoms of knee arthritis. Obtaining the viscosupplementation (Supartz) injections at issue is indicated, particularly because the medical records does not indicate that the applicant is intent on pursuing any kind of surgical remedy. Therefore, the request for five Supartz injections for the left knee is medically necessary and appropriate.