

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM13-0008009		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	06/06/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	12/30/1997
<b>Decision Date:</b>	04/16/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	07/18/2013
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	08/07/2013

### 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. 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/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:  
 State(s) of Licensure: Texas, New York, California  
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine

### 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 13, 1997. In a Utilization Review Report dated June 18, 2013, the claims administrator denied a request for knee viscosupplementation injections. The claims administrator did acknowledge the applicant had an established diagnosis of knee patellofemoral arthritis, which had reportedly responded favorably to earlier knee viscosupplementation injections. The claims administrator nevertheless went on to deny the request, invoking non-MTUS ODG Guidelines. The claims administrator also referenced a June 9, 2013, progress note in its determination. The claims administrator did note that the applicant had issues with fibromyalgia superimposed on issues with knee arthritis. The applicant and/or applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. In an undated letter, the applicant reiterated her request for the knee viscosupplementation injections. The applicant stated that she had gained weight but acknowledged that her BMI was within normal limits at 20. The applicant posited that her viscosupplementation injections were attenuating her knee pain complaints and ameliorating her ability to walk. The applicant contended that her knee pain was a function of arthritic pathology and unrelated to her fibromyalgia. In an RFA form, dated June 13, 2013, viscosupplementation injection therapy was proposed. In an associated progress note dated June 10, 2013, the attending provider stated that the applicant was receiving viscosupplementation injections approximately once every six months and was deriving appropriate benefit from the same. Repeat injections were endorsed.

## IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

### **Orthovisc Injections to the Bilateral Knees (3 injections per knee): Overturned**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG-TWC Knee and Leg Procedure Summary, Hyaluronic Acid Injections.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ACOEM Practice Guidelines, Third Edition, Knee Chapter, Specific Diagnoses, Knee Pain and Osteoarthritis, Injections, Viscosupplementation Injections.

**Decision rationale:** The MTUS does not address the topic. However, the Third Edition ACOEM Guidelines do acknowledge that viscosupplementation injections are recommended in the treatment of moderate-to-severe knee osteoarthritis. Here, both the attending provider and claims administrator have acknowledged that the applicant had developed issues with moderate-grade knee arthritis. The applicants treating provider and applicant have contended that previous viscosupplementation injections have ameliorated the applicant's ability to stand, walk, and exercise. Repeat injections, thus, are indicated as they were seemingly having a positive effect here. Therefore, the request was medically necessary.