MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM15-0137489		
Date Assigned:	07/27/2015	Date of Injury:	02/03/1992
Decision Date:	08/26/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/29/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/15/2015

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 68-year-old who has filed a claim for chronic knee pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of February 3, 1992. In a Utilization Review report dated June 26, 2015, the claims administrator failed to approve a request for Supartz (visco-supplementation) injections. The claims administrator referenced an RFA form and progress note of June 17, 2015 in its determination. A partial and/or conditional approval was seemingly issued. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. In the IMR application dated July 11, 2015, the applicant's attorney seemingly stated that he was seeking authorization for a series of five Supartz (viscosupplementation) injections, apparently without ultrasound guidance. In a June 17, 2015 progress note, the applicant reported ongoing complaints of bilateral knee pain. The applicant had undergone an earlier lumbar fusion surgery, it was reported. The applicant exhibited a visibly antalgic gait requiring usage of a cane. Medial and lateral joint line tenderness were appreciated about both knees. The applicant was given a primary operating diagnosis of osteoarthritis of the bilateral knees. Viscosupplementation (Supartz) injections were seemingly endorsed while the applicant's work restrictions were renewed. It was suggested that the applicant was one year removed from the date of an earlier viscosupplementation injection. The attending provider stated that the applicant's viscosupplementation injections had proven successful in terms of attenuating the applicant's pain complaints and improving the applicant's ability to weightbear for approximately eight months thereafter.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Supartz injections bilateral knees series of 5: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Knee (13th edition, 2015).

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ACOEM Occupational Medicine Practice Guidelines, 3rd ed., Knee Disorders, pg. 687 viscosupplementation injections.

Decision rationale: Yes, the request for a series of five Supartz (viscosupplementation) injections was medically necessary, medically appropriate, and indicated here. The MTUS does not address the topic. The Third Edition ACOEM Guidelines Knee Chapter notes, however, that viscosupplementation injections are recommended in the treatment of moderate-to-severe knee osteoarthrosis, as was/is present here. The applicant was described as having bilateral knee pain imputed to knee arthritis at age 68. The applicant had derived approximately eight months of analgesia from previous viscosupplementation injections, the treating provider maintained. Moving forward with the repeat viscosupplementation (Supartz) injections at issue, thus, was indicated. Therefore, the request was medically necessary.