

Case Number:	CM15-0141248		
Date Assigned:	07/31/2015	Date of Injury:	04/13/1989
Decision Date:	09/02/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/15/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/21/2015

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 72-year-old who has filed a claim for chronic knee and leg pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of April 12, 1989. In a Utilization Review report dated July 15, 2015, the claims administrator failed to approve a request for an electric scooter. The claims administrator referenced an RFA form of July 10, 2015 and an associated progress note of June 25, 2015 in its determination. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. In a June 25, 2015 office visit, the applicant reported advanced arthritic changes. The applicant had reportedly lost 100 pounds, it was reported. Diminished knee range of motion and knee effusion was appreciated. The attending provider expressed concerns that the applicant might gain weight as a result of inactivity. The attending provider seemingly argued against the usage of scooters and/or motorized wheelchair, noting that they would ultimately diminish the applicant's overall level of activity. A February 25, 2014 progress notes suggested that the applicant was walking with a limp and using a cane to move about following receipt of a viscosupplementation injection.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Electric Scooter: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints, Chapter 14 Ankle and Foot Complaints.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints Page(s): 340, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Power mobility devices (PMDs) Page(s): 99.

Decision rationale: No, the request for an electric scooter is not medically necessary, medically appropriate, or indicated here. As noted on page 99 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, power mobility devices and motorized scooters are "not essential to care." Page 99 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines states if there is any mobility with cane or other assistive devices, a motorized scooter is not indicated. Here, the applicant's gait was not clearly described or characterized on June 25, 2015 office visit at issue. Nevertheless, the attending provider argued that the claimant should refrain from usage of wheelchairs and scooters. The attending provider suggested that the claimant try and maximum levels of activity and lose weight. The attending provider also reported on historical note of February 27, 2014 that the applicant was using a cane to move about and was able to ambulate with the aid of a cane. The MTUS Guideline in ACOEM Chapter 13, page 339 also notes that the principle of maximizing activities while recovering from a physical problem implies knee problems as well as problems involving other parts of the body. Here, large portions of the attending provider's June 25, 2015 progress note argued against usage of the scooter in question. Historical progress notes, furthermore, seemingly suggested that the claimant did retain the ability to ambulate with the aid of a cane, arguing against the need for the electric scooter at issue. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.