

Case Number:	CM15-0149866		
Date Assigned:	08/12/2015	Date of Injury:	04/09/2013
Decision Date:	09/09/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/27/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/31/2015

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: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Pain Management

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 injured worker is a 58-year-old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 4-9-13. She reported pain in the right knee. The injured worker was diagnosed as having right knee subluxation, right knee osteoarthritis and right knee tenosynovitis. Treatment to date has included physical therapy starting in 2-2015 through 7-16-15 and a right knee total replacement on 1-7-15. At the visit on 1-27-15, the treating physician noted right knee range of motion was 10-55 degrees. On 5-28-15, the treating physician noted the right knee range of motion was 0-98 degrees. As of the PR2 dated 7-7-15, the injured worker reports significant right knee pain especially with knee flexion. Objective findings include right knee range of motion 0-85 degrees. The treating physician requested additional physical therapy 2 x weekly for 3 weeks for the right knee. Notes indicate that the patient has undergone 36 postoperative therapy sessions.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Additional physical therapy 2 times a week for 3 weeks for the right knee: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines, Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints Page(s): 337-338. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Knee & Leg Chapter, Physical Therapy.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for additional physical therapy, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines recommend a short course of active therapy with continuation of active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement levels. ODG has more specific criteria for the ongoing use of physical therapy. ODG recommends a trial of physical therapy. If the trial of physical therapy results in objective functional improvement, as well as ongoing objective treatment goals, then additional therapy may be considered. Within the documentation available for review, there is documentation of completion of prior PT sessions, but there is no documentation of specific objective functional improvement with the previous sessions and remaining deficits that cannot be addressed within the context of an independent home exercise program, yet are expected to improve with formal supervised therapy. Furthermore, in addition to the previously provided therapy, the request exceeds the amount of PT recommended by the CA MTUS (24 visits following TKA) and, unfortunately, there is no provision for modification of the current request. In light of the above issues, the currently requested additional physical therapy is not medically necessary.