

Case Number:	CM15-0181052		
Date Assigned:	09/22/2015	Date of Injury:	05/01/2006
Decision Date:	10/27/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/25/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/14/2015

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: Massachusetts

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 70 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 5-1-2006. The medical records submitted for this review did not include the details regarding the initial injury or a complete recollection of prior treatments to date. Diagnoses include status post left knee arthroscopy in 2011 and status post right knee arthroscopy in 2011. Treatments to date include Synvisc injections noted to provide four months of relief. Currently, he complained of increased left knee pain with limp. Pain was rated 8 out of 10 VAS. The provider documented a previous Synvisc injection with benefit. On 8-11-15, the physical examination documented "see report"; however, the report was not submitted for this review. The plan of care included repeat administration of Synvisc injections to the left knee x 3. The appeal requested authorization for a Synvisc injection into the left knee. The Utilization Review dated 8-25-15, denied the request indicating that the available medical records failed to include findings suggestive of symptomatic osteoarthritis and did not document a recent course of adequate conservative treatment per the California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule and American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine Guidelines.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

One synvisc injection for the left knee: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Knee Complaints 2004. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Knee & Leg (Acute & Chronic), Hyaluronic Acid Injections.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Knee & Leg (Acute & Chronic): Hyaluronic acid injections.

Decision rationale: The claimant sustained a work injury in May 2006 and continues to be treated for knee pain. In July 2014, he had undergone the third of a left knee Synvisc injections series and was having increased pain. A corticosteroid injection was administered. In November 2014, pain was rated at 8/10. The Synvisc injection has held for four months. When seen in August 2015, pain was rated at 8/10. He was having increasing pain and was limping. The prior series of Synvisc injections had provided benefit. Authorization for a repeat series of injections was requested. Hyaluronic acid injections are recommended as a possible option for severe osteoarthritis for patients who have not responded adequately to recommended conservative treatments to potentially delay total knee replacement. A repeat series of injections can be considered if there is a documented significant improvement in symptoms for 6 months or more and the symptoms recur. In this case, the claimant had only four months of improvement after the injection series done in July 2014. A repeat series is not medically necessary.