

Case Number:	CM15-0207424		
Date Assigned:	10/26/2015	Date of Injury:	01/12/2015
Decision Date:	12/07/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/02/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/22/2015

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

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 30 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on January 12, 2015. The worker is being treated for: right knee and left ankle pain. Subjective: June 22, 2015 he reported to continue being dependent upon the brace while he has had significant lessening of the sensitivity. He still feels like the knee "mechanically gives out," in the anterior compartment of the right knee. Objective: June 22, 2015 noted "gross quadriceps atrophy" remains; to be expected, and trace effusion. The knee is positive for crepitus with ranging patellofemoral joint tenderness along lateral facet of the patella anterolateral fat pad and anterolateral joint line. He has full extension, comfortable flexion; however, only to about 90 or 95 degrees with complaint of anterolateral pain upon flexion. Medications: July 27, 2015: Gabapentin, Tramadol. Diagnostics: MRI. Treatments: neurological consultation and treatment, DME brace and cane, activity modification, physical therapy, July 31, 2015 underwent right knee arthroscopy, May 05, 2015 underwent surgery of right ankle, and May 15, 2015 received pain management nerve block. On September 28, 2015 a request was made for physical therapy 9 sessions to evaluate and treat right knee and left ankle that was noncertified by Utilization Review on October 02, 2015.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

PT eval and treatment 3 x 3 of the right knee and left ankle: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Postsurgical Treatment 2009.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Physical Medicine.

Decision rationale: Physical therapy is considered medically necessary when the services require the judgment, knowledge, and skills of a qualified physical therapist due to the complexity and sophistication of the therapy and the physical condition of the patient. However, there is no clear measurable evidence of progress with the PT treatment already rendered including milestones of increased ROM, strength, and functional capacity. Review of submitted physician reports show no evidence of functional benefit, unchanged chronic symptom complaints, clinical findings, and functional status. There is no evidence documenting functional baseline with clear goals to be reached and the patient striving to reach those goals. The Chronic Pain Guidelines allow for visits of physical therapy with fading of treatment to an independent self-directed home program. It appears the employee has received significant therapy sessions without demonstrated evidence of functional improvement to allow for additional therapy treatments. There is no report of acute flare-up, new injuries, or change in symptom or clinical findings to support for formal PT in a patient that has been instructed on a home exercise program for this chronic injury. Submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication to support further physical therapy when prior treatment rendered has not resulted in any functional benefit. The PT eval and treatment 3 x 3 of the right knee and left ankle is not medically necessary and appropriate.