

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0043497		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	03/13/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	05/15/2006
<b>Decision Date:</b>	04/23/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	02/17/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	03/06/2015

### 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: Anesthesiology, 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 68 year old female with an industrial injury dated May 15, 2006. The injured worker diagnoses include osteoarthritis of knee, localized, primary osteoarthritis and status post left total knee arthroplasty. Treatment to date has included diagnostic studies, prescribed medications, physical therapy, and periodic follow up visits. According to the progress note dated 12/30/2014, the injured worker presented 6 weeks post left total knee arthroplasty and had no significant complaints at that time. The treating physician noted that the injured worker was progressing with physical therapy. The treating physician noted that the physical exam revealed excellent range of motion greater than 120 degrees of flexion. The treating physician also noted that the x-ray revealed a well-positioned implant. The treatment plan included continuation of physical therapy 3 times a week for 4 weeks for the left knee.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Physical Therapy 3 times a week for 4 weeks for the Left Knee:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98.

**Decision rationale:** Physical Medicine, p98. Physical Medicine is recommended as indicated below. Passive therapy (those treatment modalities that do not require energy expenditure on the part of the injured worker) can provide short term relief during the early phases of pain treatment and are directed at controlling symptoms such as pain, inflammation and swelling and to improve the rate of healing soft tissue injuries. They can be used sparingly with active therapies to help control swelling, pain and inflammation during the rehabilitation process. Active therapy is based on the philosophy that therapeutic exercise and/or activity are beneficial for restoring flexibility, strength, endurance, function, range of motion, and can alleviate discomfort. Active therapy requires an internal effort by the individual to complete a specific exercise or task. This form of therapy may require supervision from a therapist or medical provider such as verbal, visual and/or tactile instruction(s). Injured workers are instructed and expected to continue active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement levels. Home exercise can include exercise with or without mechanical assistance or resistance and functional activities with assistive devices. (Colorado, 2002) (Airaksinen, 2006) Injured worker-specific hand therapy is very important in reducing swelling, decreasing pain, and improving range of motion in CRPS. (Li, 2005) The use of active treatment modalities (e.g., exercise, education, activity modification) instead of passive treatments is associated with substantially better clinical outcomes. In a large case series of injured workers with low back pain treated by physical therapists, those adhering to guidelines for active rather than passive treatments incurred fewer treatment visits, cost less, and had less pain and less disability. The overall success rates were 64.7% among those adhering to the active treatment recommendations versus 36.5% for passive treatment. (Fritz, 2007) Physical Medicine Guidelines - Allow for fading of treatment frequency (from up to 3 visits per week to 1 or less), plus active self-directed home Physical Medicine. Myalgia and myositis, unspecified (ICD9 729.1): 9-10 visits over 8 weeks Neuralgia, neuritis, and radiculitis, unspecified (ICD9 729.2) 8-10 visits over 4 weeks. Reflex sympathetic dystrophy (CRPS) (ICD9 337.2): 24 visits over 16 weeks. According to the documents available for review, the injured worker has previously undergone numerous session of PT. The IW should now be transitioned to a home based self-directed PT program. Further sessions of PT would be in contrast to the guidelines as set forth in the MTUS. Therefore, at this time, the requirements for treatment have not been met and medical necessity has not been established.