

Case Number:	CM15-0056285		
Date Assigned:	04/01/2015	Date of Injury:	05/03/2012
Decision Date:	05/07/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/16/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/24/2015

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 55 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 5/3/12. The injured worker reported symptoms in the right knee. The injured worker was diagnosed as having left knee patellofemoral and lateral compartment chondromalacia, left shoulder rotator cuff tendinitis, left hip partial thickness tear of the gluteus medius and minimus tendon. Treatments to date have included status post right knee arthroscopic surgery, physical therapy, activity modification, injections, and oral pain medication. Currently, the injured worker complains of right knee pain. The plan of care was for a Synvisc injection to the right knee.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Synvisc injection x 1 to the right knee: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official disability guidelines Knee & Leg (Acute & Chronic) chapter, under Hyaluronic acid injections.

Decision rationale: Based on the 08/21/14 progress report provided by treating physician, the patient presents with right knee pain. The request is for Synvisc injection x1 to the right knee. RFA not provided. Patient's diagnosis on 08/21/14 included right knee osteoarthritis. Treatment to date included physical therapy, surgery injections and oral pain medications. Patient is permanent and stationary, per treater report dated 01/16/14. ODG guidelines, Knee & Leg (Acute & Chronic) chapter, under Hyaluronic acid injections, state the following: "Recommended as a possible option for severe osteoarthritis for patients who have not responded adequately to recommended conservative treatments (exercise, NSAIDs or acetaminophen), to potentially delay total knee replacement, but in recent quality studies the magnitude of improvement appears modest at best. See Recent research below. While osteoarthritis of the knee is a recommended indication, there is insufficient evidence for other conditions, including patellofemoral arthritis, chondromalacia patellae, osteochondritis dissecans, or patellofemoral syndrome (patellar knee pain). Hyaluronic acids are naturally occurring substances in the body's connective tissues that cushion and lubricate the joints. Intra-articular injection of hyaluronic acid can decrease symptoms of osteoarthritis of the knee; there are significant improvements in pain and functional outcomes with few adverse events." Repeat injections are recommended if there is symptomatic improvement lasting 6 months or more. ODG further states that "This study assessing the efficacy of intra-articular injections of hyaluronic acid (HA) compared to placebo in patients with osteoarthritis of the knee found that results were similar and were not statistically significant between treatment groups, but HA was somewhat superior to placebo in improving knee pain and function, with no difference between 3 or 6 consecutive injections." Per progress report dated 01/09/14, the patient is status post right knee arthroscopy 03/15/13. Patient received Synvisc one to the right knee on 06/26/13, which was beneficial. Synvisc injection was administered to right knee on 01/09/14. UR letter dated 03/16/15 states that according to progress report dated 10/02/14, "...last Synvisc injection was on 01/09/14 and the claimant reports of receiving approximately six to seven months of relief with the injection." UR denied current request stating "...while there is some evidence of sustained benefit with the 06/26/13, 01/09/14 injections, the benefits and sustained gains for the last injection on 10/02/14 are unknown." Patient presents with a diagnosis of osteoarthritis for which synvisc injection is indicated and continues with pain. Treater has documented symptomatic improvement from prior injections. The request appears reasonable and in accordance with guidelines. Therefore, the request IS medically necessary.