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| <b>Case Number:</b>   | CM15-0060387 |                              |            |
| <b>Date Assigned:</b> | 04/06/2015   | <b>Date of Injury:</b>       | 09/25/2014 |
| <b>Decision Date:</b> | 05/12/2015   | <b>UR Denial Date:</b>       | 03/18/2015 |
| <b>Priority:</b>      | Standard     | <b>Application Received:</b> | 03/30/2015 |

### 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: Illinois, California, Texas  
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Orthopedic Surgery

### CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This injured worker is a 24-year-old female who sustained an industrial injury on 9/25/14. Injury occurred while she was carrying a heavy box when she turned and twisted, and felt a pop and sharp pain in the left knee. Conservative treatment included anti-inflammatory medications, pain medications, activity modification, crutches, and physical therapy. Records documented persistent severe anterior knee pain and swelling, and inability to fully flex or extend the knee. She was unable to return to work. The 12/2/14 left knee MRI impression documented an unremarkable study. The 2/16/15 treating physician report cited severe left knee pain and a flexion contracture. She had chondromalacia patella and a lateral patellar tilt per plain film radiographs. Physical exam documented atrophy of the left thigh, lateral patellar subluxation, crepitus and pain about the patellofemoral joint, and point tenderness about the medial joint line. Range of motion was -20 to 120 degrees. Strength and sensation were normal. The diagnosis was left knee patellofemoral instability with chondromalacia patella, and flexion contracture with thigh muscle atrophy. The 3/6/15 treating physician appeal letter indicated that the injured worker remained symptomatic with moderate effusion, lateral patellar tilt, crepitus and pain about the patellofemoral joint, and medial joint line tenderness. She continued to have anterior knee pain and locking. The MRI was unremarkable, however plain radiographs demonstrated lateral patellar tilt and subluxation consistent with patella femoral instability. The treating physician report recommended left knee arthroscopy with lateral release based on her clinical presentation and plain film radiographs. Associated requests included 12 visits of post-op physical therapy, crutches, cold therapy unit, and a cane to assist with ambulation. The 3/18/15

utilization review non-certified the request for post-op physical therapy x 12 visits for the left knee as the associated surgery was not medically necessary.

### **IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES**

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

**Post-op physical therapy x 12 for the left knee:** Overturned

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

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 24.

**Decision rationale:** The California Post-Surgical Treatment Guidelines for lateral retinacular release suggest a general course of 12 post-operative visits over 12 weeks during the 6-month post-surgical treatment period. An initial course of therapy would be supported for one-half the general course or 6 visits. If it is determined that additional functional improvement can be accomplished after completion of the general course of therapy, physical medicine treatment may be continued up to the end of the postsurgical physical medicine period. This is the initial request for post-operative physical therapy and, although it exceeds recommendations for initial care, is within the recommended general course. Therefore, this request for is medically necessary.