

Case Number:	CM15-0084406		
Date Assigned:	05/06/2015	Date of Injury:	10/02/2008
Decision Date:	06/05/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/17/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/01/2015

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 43-year-old female, who sustained an industrial injury on September 6, 2014. She reported right knee pain and low back pain. The injured worker was diagnosed as having internal derangement of the right knee, status post total knee replacement on the right side and discogenic lumbar condition with facet inflammation. Treatment to date has included radiographic imaging, diagnostic studies, surgical intervention of the right knee, physical therapy, continuous passive motion (CPM) machine, medications and work restrictions. Currently, the injured worker complains of continued right knee pain with warmth to the touch, swelling, stiffness, and low back pain. The injured worker reported an industrial injury in 2014, resulting in the above noted pain. She was treated conservatively and surgically without complete resolution of the pain. It was noted she required a two-wheeled walker to ambulate when physical therapy sessions started however; she became able to walk with a cane eventually. She still continued to report pain and stiffness of the right knee and low back. Evaluation on February 11, 2015, revealed continued pain. She was noted to have sleep disruptions secondary to the pain and was noted to not be able to do daily chores. It was also noted at this time the lumbar spine was symptomatic and getting worse. Evaluation on March 10, 2015, revealed continued pain although improved. She was noted to ambulate with crutches. Physical therapy for the lumbar spine and right knee was requested.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical Therapy 3 x per week x 4 weeks Lumbar Spine and Right Knee: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Guidelines Page(s): 99.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Therapy, pages 98-99.

Decision rationale: The patient has history of right TKA and MUA and has completed 12 PT visits with an additional recent 8 sessions authorized. 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 Physical Therapy 3 x per week x 4 weeks Lumbar Spine and Right Knee is not medically necessary and appropriate.