

Case Number:	CM14-0133665		
Date Assigned:	09/18/2014	Date of Injury:	11/16/2009
Decision Date:	10/16/2014	UR Denial Date:	07/21/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/18/2014

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. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Internal Medicine, has a subspecialty in Nephrology and is licensed to practice in California. 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

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 is a 56 year old male with a 11/16/09 injury date. The mechanism of injury was not provided. In a follow-up on 7/2/14, the patient reported that he continues to have excellent relief in both knees since the previous Synvisc injections in April 2014. The right knee was still feeling good but the left knee was starting to feel achy, stiff, and somewhat painful. There are no reported objective findings. MRIs of the knees from 12/22/09 showed findings of cartilage wear consistent with osteoarthritis. Diagnostic impression: bilateral knee osteoarthritis. Treatment to date: NSAIDs, knee arthroscopy, physical therapy, multiple Synvisc One injections. A UR decision on 7/21/14 denied the request for Synvisc One injections on the basis that there had not yet been documentation of at least six months of relief after the prior knee injections which occurred in April 2014.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

(2) Synvisc One injections 48mg/6ml, one for each knee: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation CRITERIA FOR HYALURONIC ACID OR HYLAN, OFFICIAL DISABILITY GUIDELINES: HYALURONIC ACID INJECTIONS

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG): Knee and Leg Chapter.

Decision rationale: CA MTUS does not address this issue. ODG recommends viscosupplementation injections in patients with significantly symptomatic osteoarthritis that has not responded adequately to standard nonpharmacologic and pharmacologic treatments or is intolerant of these therapies; OR is not a candidate for total knee replacement or has failed previous knee surgery for arthritis; OR a younger patient wanting to delay total knee replacement; AND failure of conservative treatment; AND plain x-ray or arthroscopy findings diagnostic of osteoarthritis. A repeat series of injections is recommended if there is documented significant improvement in symptoms for 6 months or more, and symptoms recur. In the present case, there appears to be significant pain relief in the knees at the 3-month mark after the initial injection. However, there is no available documentation beyond that point that shows how the patient is doing at six or more months. Therefore, the request for (2) Synvisc One injections 48mg/6ml, one for each knee, is not medically necessary.