

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0144242		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/12/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/17/2013
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/15/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	08/20/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	09/05/2014

### 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 Occupational Medicine, 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:

The applicant is represented [REDACTED] employee who has filed a claim for chronic knee pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of April 17, 2013. Thus far, the applicant has been treated with the following: Analgesic medications; unspecified amounts of physical therapy; earlier knee surgery, and extensive periods of time off of work. In a Utilization Review Report dated August 21, 2014, the claims administrator denied a request for Synvisc injections. Overall rationale was sparse. The claims administrator seemingly based his denial on an alleged paucity of supporting information on the part of the attending provider. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. In an August 13, 2014, progress note, the applicant reported persistent complaints of left knee pain, 7/10, despite performance of home exercises. 7/10 right knee pain was also noted. The applicant exhibited healed surgical scars about the left knee. The applicant was asked to pursue viscosupplementation injections while remaining off of work, on total temporary disability.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Synvisc injection to the left knee times 3, once a week for 3 weeks:** Overturned

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Treatment Index, 11th Edition (web), 2014, Knee & Leg Chapter, Hyaluronic acid Injections

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: <Insert Other Basis/Criteria> ACOEM V.3 > Knee > Specific Diagnoses > Knee Pain and Osteoarthritis > Injections Viscosupplementation Injections Viscosupplementation has been used for knee osteoarthritis(15, 1253, 1279-1296) and to treat pain after arthroscopy and meniscectomy.(1297) Similar to glucocorticosteroid injections, the purpose is to gain sufficient relief to either resume

**Decision rationale:** The MTUS does not address the topic. As noted in the Third Edition ACOEM Guidelines Knee Chapter, viscosupplementation injections have been used for knee osteoarthritis and to treat residual knee pain after arthroscopy and meniscectomy. ACOEM goes on to note that indications for viscosupplementation injections include knee pain from osteoarthritis, which is unsatisfactorily controlled with NSAIDs, Tylenol, weight loss, and/or exercise programs. In this case, the applicant's left knee pain has, in fact, proven recalcitrant to time, medications, physical therapy, and earlier knee arthroscopy. Some degree of arthritis is likely, given the applicant's age (55) and history of prior knee surgery. Pursuit of the proposed Synvisc (viscosupplementation) injections is indicated, for all of the stated reasons. Therefore, the request is medically necessary.