

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0028577		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	06/16/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	05/03/2011
<b>Decision Date:</b>	09/17/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	02/11/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	03/06/2014

### 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 Neurology, has a subspecialty in Neuromuscular Medicine and is licensed to practice in New Jersey. 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 patient is a 57-year-old man who sustained a work-related injury on May 3, 2011. Subsequently, he developed bilateral knee pain. The patient underwent right knee diagnostic and operative arthroscopy revision on March 16, 2012. According to the evaluation dated on January 27, 2014, he reported stiffness, achiness, and pain to the bilateral knees. The patient was treated with Synvisc injections. The last Synvisc injection of the right knee was done on June 3, 2013. Examination of the left knee revealed normal gait, normal range of motion and no weakness. No effusion was noted. Examination of the right knee revealed healed arthroscopic portals with range of motion from 0 to 125. The patient received a steroid injection with kenalog. The provider requested authorization for one Synvisc viscosupplementation injection.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**One Synvisc viscosupplementation injection to the right knee:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Hyaluronic acid injections, <http://www.worklossdatainstitute.verioiponly.com/odgtwc/knee.htm#Hyaluronicacidinjections>.

**Decision rationale:** According to ODG guidelines, Hyaluronic acid injections are 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. 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).

Viscosupplementation is an effective treatment for OA of the knee with beneficial effects: on pain, function and patient global assessment; and at different post injection periods but especially at the 5 to 13 week post injection period. There is no documentation that the patient failed conservative therapies. There is no documentation that the patient is suffering from osteoarthritis or severe osteoarthritis that did not respond to conservative therapies. The patient received intra-articular steroid injection; however the outcome of that injection was not clear. There is no documentation of the efficacy and the duration of pain relief with the injection. The medical necessity for Synvisc viscosupplementation injection is not established.