

Case Number:	CM14-0003239		
Date Assigned:	06/13/2014	Date of Injury:	09/01/2012
Decision Date:	03/16/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/27/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/08/2014

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. 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: Texas, Ohio, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine

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 a represented [REDACTED] beneficiary who has filed a claim for chronic knee pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of September 1, 2012. In a Utilization Review Report dated December 27, 2013, the claims administrator partially approved request for 18 sessions of physical therapy to the left knee as 12 sessions of physical therapy to the same. The claims administrator referenced an office visit of October 15, 2013 in its determination. The claims administrator suggested that the applicant was set to undergo a total knee arthroplasty surgery and that the request for physical therapy represented a request for postoperative physical therapy treatment. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. In a September 30, 2013 progress note, the applicant was described as having undergone one total knee arthroplasty. Visco supplementation injections on the symptomatic knee had proven unsuccessful. The applicant was reportedly considering a total knee arthroplasty as of that point in time, it was stated. On July 20, 2013, the applicant received a third of three viscosupplementation injections for the left knee. In a March 27, 2013 progress note, the applicant was described as having issues with severe left knee degenerative joint disease. The applicant was using Voltaren, Neurontin, Pamelor, Celebrex, and Norco, it was acknowledged. The applicant's work status was not detailed at this point in time.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

PHYSICAL THERAPY 18 VISITS, LEFT KNEE: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 24.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: No, the request for 18 sessions of physical therapy was not medically necessary, medically appropriate, or indicated here. The request in question does represent a request for postoperative physical therapy for the knee following planned total knee arthroplasty surgery. While the MTUS Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines do support a general course of 24 sessions of treatment following planned total knee arthroplasty surgery, this recommendation is, however, qualified by commentary made in MTUS 9792.24.3.a.2 to the effect that an initial course of postoperative physical therapy represents one-half of the general course of physical therapy. One-half of 24 visits, thus, represent 12 visits. The 18-session course of therapy proposed, thus, represents treatment well in excess of the initial course of physical therapy endorsed following the planned total knee arthroplasty surgery. The request, thus, as written, is at odds with MTUS principles and parameters. Therefore, the request was not medically necessary.