

Case Number:	CM15-0126955		
Date Assigned:	07/09/2015	Date of Injury:	04/10/2004
Decision Date:	08/05/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/24/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/01/2015

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 74-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 4/10/04. He has reported initial complaints of bilateral knee injuries. The diagnoses have included post-surgical pain, muscle weakness, and chronic pain both knees. Treatment to date has included medications, activity modifications, diagnostics, off work, surgery, physical therapy and other modalities. Currently, as per the physician progress note dated 6/13/15, the injured worker complains of constant pain in the right knee. He is permanent and stationary and is for chronic pain management. He notes that he maintains some level of activity with the use of Norco and also the worst pain is upon rising in the morning. The physical exam reveals that the right knee has warmth and tenderness noted to palpation, decreased strength and tone are demonstrated, and range of motion is decreased. There is no previous therapy sessions noted. The physician requested treatment included 8 physical therapy sessions for the right knee due to leg weakness, fall risk and post bilateral knee replacements.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

8 physical therapy sessions for the right knee: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98.

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

Decision rationale: Review indicates the patient has history of s/p right knee surgery on 10/9/12 and left knee surgery on 1/29/14, over 1-1/2 years ago with chronic guidelines applicable. 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 8 physical therapy sessions for the right knee is not medically necessary and appropriate.