

Case Number:	CM15-0172961		
Date Assigned:	09/15/2015	Date of Injury:	01/08/2010
Decision Date:	10/22/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/03/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/02/2015

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: Texas, New York, 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 January 8, 2010. In a Utilization Review report dated August 3, 2015, the claims administrator failed to approve a request for Supartz (viscosupplementation) injections. Progress notes of July 24, 2015 and June 25, 2015 were referenced in the determination. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On May 15, 2015, Pennsaid and ultrasound-guided knee corticosteroid injections were sought. In an associated progress note date April 20, 2015, the applicant reported ongoing complaints of knee pain. The applicant was working despite the same, it was reported. Highly variable 6 to 8/10 pain complaints were reported. The applicant was on Tramadol and blood pressure lowering medications, it was reported. On September 15, 2015, the attending provider appealed previously denied viscosupplementation injections. The applicant had undergone meniscectomy-chondroplasty surgery on August 10, 2015, it was reported. The applicant exhibited a normal gait. The applicant was severely obese, standing 6 feet 1 inch tall and weighing 289 pounds. The applicant was given various diagnoses, including degenerative joint disease of right knee. The applicant was placed off of work. The applicant had undergone a recent left knee arthroscopy, it was reported. On August 4, 2015, the attending provider reiterated his request for right knee viscosupplementation injection. The applicant was pending a left knee surgery, it was reported. On July 24, 2015, the applicant was described as having moderate-to- severe right knee degenerative joint disease appreciated on knee MRI imaging on April 26, 2014. The applicant was working fulltime, it was suggested at this point. The attending

provider noted that the applicant had issues with marked tenderness about the affected right knee. The applicant was obese, with a BMI of 35, it was reported on this date. Swelling, stiffness, and pain about the injured were reported.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Series of 3 Ultrasound-guided Supartz injections, Right Knee: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines: Knee & Leg (Acute & Chronic) - Hyaluronic acid injections.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ACOEM Occupational Medicine Practice Guidelines, 3rd ed., Knee Disorders, page 687, 704.

Decision rationale: The request for series of three ultrasound-guided Supartz (viscosupplementation injections) is medically necessary, medically appropriate, and indicated here. The MTUS does not address the topic. However, the Third Edition ACOEM Guidelines Knee Chapter notes that that intraarticular viscosupplementation injections are indicated in the treatment of moderate-to-severe knee osteoarthritis, as was seemingly present here. The applicant was described as having moderate-to-severe knee arthritis present on the July 24, 2015 office visit. The applicant reported difficulty standing and walking, swelling, stiffness, and the like, it was reported on that date. Moving forward with the planned viscosupplementation (Supartz) injections was, thus, indicated here. While the Third Edition ACOEM Guidelines Knee Chapter does acknowledge that knee injections are typically performed without fluoroscopic or ultrasound guidance, here, however, the applicant was characterized as a severely obese individual with a BMI in the 35 range, suggesting that the ultrasound-guidance component of the request would likely have been beneficial here for injection guidance purposes. Therefore, the request for viscosupplementation (Supartz) injections with ultrasound guidance was medically necessary.