

Case Number:	CM15-0175100		
Date Assigned:	09/16/2015	Date of Injury:	04/29/2013
Decision Date:	10/20/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/07/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/04/2015

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: North Carolina, Georgia
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This is a 64 year old female with a date of injury on 4-29-2013. A review of the medical records indicates that the injured worker is undergoing treatment for tear of lateral cartilage or meniscus of knee. Medical records (6-11-2015 to 7-30-2015) indicate ongoing knee and back pain. The treating physician noted (7-30-2015) that per the physical therapy report from 7-7-2015, the injured worker's "pain level persists and combined with high anxiety levels her strength and functionality appear to have decreased." The physical exam (6-11-2015) revealed a mildly antalgic gait. There was tenderness to palpation in both knees, but no significant swelling. Treatment has included arthroscopic right knee surgery, physical therapy (at least 12 sessions) and medication. The request for authorization dated 7-30-2015 was for a Functional Restoration Program evaluation. The original Utilization Review (UR) (8-7-2015) denied a request for a Functional Restoration Program evaluation.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Functional Restoration Program Evaluation QTY 1.00: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Functional restoration programs (FRPs).

Decision rationale: CA MTUS considers functional restoration programs recommended where there is access to programs with proven successful outcomes, for patients with conditions that put them at risk of delayed recovery when the patient is motivated to improve and return to work, and meets the patient selection criteria outlined next. These criteria include ALL of the following: (1) An adequate and thorough evaluation has been made, including baseline functional testing so follow-up with the same test can note functional improvement; (2) Previous methods of treating chronic pain have been unsuccessful and there is an absence of other options likely to result in significant clinical improvement; (3) The patient has a significant loss of ability to function independently resulting from the chronic pain; (4) The patient is not a candidate where surgery or other treatments would clearly be warranted (if a goal of treatment is to prevent or avoid controversial or optional surgery, a trial of 10 visits may be implemented to assess whether surgery may be avoided); (5) The patient exhibits motivation to change, and is willing to forgo secondary gains, including disability payments to effect this change; & (6) Negative predictors of success above have been addressed. Negative predictors of success include (1) a negative relationship with the employer/supervisor; (2) poor work adjustment and satisfaction; (3) a negative outlook about future employment; (4) high levels of psychosocial distress (higher pretreatment levels of depression, pain and disability); (5) involvement in financial disability disputes; (6) greater rates of smoking; (7) duration of pre-referral disability time; (8) prevalence of opioid use; and (9) pretreatment levels of pain. Integrative summary reports that include treatment goals, progress assessment and stage of treatment, must be made available upon request and at least on a bi-weekly basis during the course of the treatment program. Treatment is not suggested for longer than 2 weeks without evidence of demonstrated efficacy as documented by subjective and objective gains. In this case, the claimant has no clear documentation of motivation to changes and the presence or absence of any negative predictors have not been addressed. The original UR decision denying a functional restoration program is upheld. Functional restoration program is not medically necessary or appropriate in this case.