

Case Number:	CM15-0063373		
Date Assigned:	04/09/2015	Date of Injury:	03/26/2014
Decision Date:	05/12/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/04/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/02/2015

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: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Pain Management

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 58 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 3/26/14. He has reported a left knee injury after a bag rolled from a belt loader and fell onto his left knee. The diagnoses have included contusion of knee, osteoarthritis of the left knee and knee joint replacement. Treatment to date has included medications, injections, physical therapy, and conservative measures. The Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) of the left knee was done on 5/2/14. There were previous therapy sessions noted. Currently, as per the physician progress note dated 2/24/15, the injured worker complains of constant minimal pain in the left knee. The physical exam of the left knee revealed range of motion was 5-120 degrees of flexion and there was no ligamentous laxity. The physician noted that he was to remain on restrictions until 3/1/15, follow up in 3 weeks and the physician requested treatment included Physical Therapy 12 sessions.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical Therapy, 12 sessions: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine Page(s): 98-99.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Postsurgical Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 98-99. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, Knee Chapter, Physical Medicine.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for physical therapy, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines recommend a short course (10 sessions) of active therapy with continuation of active therapies at home as an extension of the treatment process in order to maintain improvement levels. ODG has more specific criteria for the ongoing use of physical therapy. ODG recommends a trial of physical therapy. If the trial of physical therapy results in objective functional improvement, as well as ongoing objective treatment goals, then additional therapy may be considered. Within the documentation available for review, there is no documentation of specific objective functional improvement with the most recent previous sessions and remaining deficits that cannot be addressed within the context of an independent home exercise program, yet are expected to improve with formal supervised therapy. Furthermore, the request exceeds the amount of PT recommended by the CA MTUS and, unfortunately, there is no provision for modification of the current request. In light of the above issues, the currently requested physical therapy is not medically necessary.