

Case Number:	CM15-0063454		
Date Assigned:	04/09/2015	Date of Injury:	01/13/2013
Decision Date:	05/18/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/10/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/03/2015

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, Florida, 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 injured worker is a 42 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 1/13/2013. Diagnoses include right knee chondromalacia patellae with patellofemoral malalignment with quadriceps muscle atrophy and weakness. Treatment to date has included physical therapy. Per the Primary Treating Physician's Progress Report dated 2/25/2015, the injured worker reported a painful condition above the right knee. Physical examination revealed well healing incisions. There was quadriceps muscle atrophy with decreased tone when compared to the left. Patella is stable. There is popping and clicking about the patellofemoral joint and patellofemoral malalignment. Flexion was 120 degrees. The plan of care included continued use of patellar stabilizing knee brace, medications and physical therapy. Authorization was requested for physical therapy (2x6) for the right knee.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical Therapy Two Times a Week for Six Weeks, Right Knee, Quantity 12: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Medicine.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines 8 C.C.R. 9792.20 - 9792.26 MTUS (Effective July 18, 2009) Page(s): 98 of 127.

Decision rationale: This claimant was injured over two years ago with right knee chondromalacia patellae. There has been prior therapy with unknown functional improvement outcomes. The status of the home exercise program was not discussed. There was quadriceps atrophy. They will use a knee brace and physical therapy. The MTUS does permit physical therapy in chronic situations, noting that one should allow for fading of treatment frequency (from up to 3 visits per week to 1 or less), plus active self-directed home Physical Medicine. The conditions mentioned are Myalgia and myositis, unspecified (ICD9 729.1): 9-10 visits over 8 weeks; Neuralgia, neuritis, and radiculitis, unspecified (ICD9 729.2) 8-10 visits over 4 weeks; and Reflex sympathetic dystrophy (CRPS) (ICD9 337.2): 24 visits over 16 weeks. This claimant does not have these conditions. And, after several documented sessions of therapy, it is not clear why the patient would not be independent with self-care at this point. Also, there are especially strong caveats in the MTUS/ACOEM guidelines against over treatment in the chronic situation supporting the clinical notion that the move to independence and an active, independent home program is clinically in the best interest of the patient. They cite: Although mistreating or under treating pain is of concern, an even greater risk for the physician is over treating the chronic pain patient. Over treatment often results in irreparable harm to the patient's socioeconomic status, home life, personal relationships, and quality of life in general; A patient's complaints of pain should be acknowledged. Patient and clinician should remain focused on the ultimate goal of rehabilitation leading to optimal functional recovery, decreased healthcare utilization, and maximal self actualization. There has been prior therapy with unknown functional improvement outcomes. The status of the home exercise program was not discussed. This request for more skilled, monitored therapy is not medically necessary.