DATE OF REVIEW: November 12, 2008

IRO Case #:

Description of the services in dispute:

12 physical therapy visits between 9/29/08 and 11/13/08.

A description of the qualifications for each physician or other health care provider who reviewed the decision

The physician who provided this review is board certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery. This reviewer is a member of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and the Society of Military Orthopaedic Surgeons. This reviewer has been in active practice since 2005.

Review Outcome

Upon independent review the reviewer finds that the previous adverse determination/adverse determinations should be:

Upheld

It is determined that the 12 physical therapy visits the patient received between 9/29/08 and 11/13/08 is not considered to be medically necessary.

Information provided to the IRO for review

Records From Insurance Company

Letter from Hand & Physical Therapy Centers dated 10/15/08 – 1 page
Preauthorization request form dated 9/30/08 – 1 page
Office note, MD, dated 9/15/08 – 1 page
Peer Review Report dated 10/17/08 – 2 pages
Peer Review Report dated 9/30/08 – 2 pages
Certificate of Medical Necessity – 1 page

Records From Provider

Letter dated 9/2/08 – 2 pages
Letter from Hand & Physical Therapy Centers dated 9/2/08 – 1 page

Operative note dated 8/18/08 – 4 pages
Preauthorization request dated 8/28/08 – 1 page
Prescription dated 9/29/08 – 1 page
Notice of discharge from Physical Therapy dated 10/27/08 – 1 page
Physician's Communication note 9/26/08 – 1 page
Office note, MD, dated 9/15/08 – 1 page
Office note, MD, dated 8/27/08 – 1 page
Office note, MD, dated 8/25/08 – 2 pages
Therapy referral dated 9/26/08 – 1 page
Therapy referral dated 8/27/08 – 1 page
PT Initial Evaluation dated 9/2/08 – 3 pages
PT Progress note dated 9/26/08 – 2 pages
PT Progress note dated 9/24/08 – 2 pages
PT Progress note dated 9/22/08 – 2 pages
PT Progress note dated 9/19/08 – 2 pages
PT Progress note dated 9/17/08 – 2 pages
PT Progress note dated 9/16/08 – 2 pages
PT Progress note dated 9/12/08 – 2 pages
PT Progress note dated 9/10/08 – 2 pages
PT Progress note dated 9/8/08 – 2 pages
PT Progress note dated 9/5/08 – 2 pages
PT Progress note dated 9/3/08 – 2 pages
PT Progress note dated 9/2/08 – 2 pages
PT Re-evaluation dated 9/26/08 – 3 pages

Records From State:
Request for IRO
Letter dated 10/21/08 – 2 pages
Letter dated 10/16/08 – 1 page
Letter dated 10/2/08 – 2 pages
Fax cover sheet from Office of Injured Employee Counsel dated 10/30/08 – 1 page

Patient clinical history [summary]

The patient is a male with an original injury to his left knee in xx/xx. He underwent a left knee arthroscopy with plica debridement on 8/13/2007. He had continued symptoms and underwent a second left knee arthroscopy with partial medial meniscectomy on 8/18/08. Since his second surgery he has had 12 visits of therapy. During therapy he was noted to improve his pain, strength, and range of motion. By his evaluation on 9/26/08 he was noted to have met his short term goals with full strength and range of motion. Additional therapy was recommended to meet the long

term goals.

Analysis and explanation of the decision include clinical basis, findings and conclusions used to support the decision.

The ODG does recommend up to 12 visits of physical therapy over 12 weeks following a knee arthroscopy with partial medial meniscectomy. This patient had 12 visits of therapy but they were done over only a 4 week period. However, he has made significant improvements. While the ODG does support post operative therapy following arthroscopic partial meniscectomy, there has been recent literature that questions the efficacy of these treatments. Goodwin 2003 concluded "The results indicate that the supervised physical therapy used in this study is not beneficial for patients in the early period after uncomplicated arthroscopic partial meniscectomy." Morrissey 2006 states "Quick recovery occurs in these patients when only a home exercise program is given." A prospective randomized controlled trial by Jokl 1989 "a well-planned, unsupervised home exercise knee rehabilitation program can produce equally good postoperative recovery as compared to a supervised outpatient physical therapy regimen in properly selected patients following arthroscopic partial meniscectomy of the knee". These are supported by Goodwin 2003.

There is some support for therapy following meniscectomy, Vervest 1999 in a prospective randomized controlled study comparing supervised therapy versus home exercises found "exercising under the supervision of a physiotherapist led to high patient satisfaction and good functional rehabilitation after partial arthroscopic meniscectomy." However these result were obtained with only 9 visits of therapy over 3 weeks. In addition, a study by Moffet 1994 concluded "The results of this study highlight the importance of instituting an early intensive and supervised rehabilitation program, especially for workers returning to a strenuous job requiring good knee extensor muscle function." This study also reported only 9 visits of therapy over 3 weeks.

While there is a debate on whether post operative supervised therapy is necessary following an arthroscopic partial medial meniscectomy, it is still a reasonable practice, however there is little indication for more than 12 visits of therapy.

A description and the source of the screening criteria or other clinical basis used to make the decision:

Official Disability Guidelines knee chapter

Goodwin PC, Morrissey MC, Omar RZ, Brown M, Southall K, McAuliffe TB.
Effectiveness of supervised physical therapy in the early period after arthroscopic partial meniscectomy.. Phys Ther. 2003 Jun;83(6): 520-35.

Morrissey MC, Milligan P, Goodwin PC.

Evaluating treatment effectiveness: benchmarks for rehabilitation after partial meniscectomy knee arthroscopy.
Am J Phys Med Rehabil. 2006 Jun;85(6): 490-501
Jokl P, Stull PA, Lynch JK, Vaughan V.
Independent home versus supervised rehabilitation following arthroscopic knee surgery--a prospective randomized trial.
Arthroscopy. 1989;5(4): 298-305.

Goodwin PC, Morrissey MC.
Physical therapy after arthroscopic partial meniscectomy: is it effective?
Exerc Sport Sci Rev. 2003 Apr;31(2): 85-90. Review.

Vervest AM, Maurer CA, Schambergen TG, de Bie RA, Bulstra SK.
Effectiveness of physiotherapy after meniscectomy.
Knee Surg Sports Traumatol Arthrosc. 1999;7(6): 360-4.

Moffet H, Richards CL, Malouin F, Bravo G, Paradis G.
Early and intensive physiotherapy accelerates recovery postarthroscopic meniscectomy: results of a randomized controlled study.
Arch Phys Med Rehabil. 1994 Apr;75(4): 415-26.