

Case Number:	CM13-0007718		
Date Assigned:	12/27/2013	Date of Injury:	03/31/2005
Decision Date:	03/18/2014	UR Denial Date:	07/13/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/05/2013

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to a physician reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The physician reviewer is Board Certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, has a subspecialty in Neuromuscular Medicine and is licensed to practice in Maryland. 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 physician 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

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 patient is a 58-year-old male with date of injury of 3/31/2005. Under consideration are prospective requests for unknown prescription of Norco and an unknown prescription of medical marijuana. Per 6/17/13 office visit the patient presents has complaints of right knee pain rated as 6-7/10. The patient is status post Right knee arthroscopic surgery with lysis of adhesions and manipulation of frozen knee was performed on 3/13/2013. Record review indicated that patient had undergone left knee arthroscopy in the past. On January 13, 2012, Patient underwent revision on the right knee due to failed right knee replacement. The subsequent records indicate that he continued to treat for both knees thereafter. Following the right knee surgery he began having increasing left knee complaints due to favoring of the right knee. . Documentation states that he has had 2-3 right knee cortisone injections, He has completed at least 14 to 15 sessions of post operative physical therapy . His physical exam on 6/17/13 revealed a healed right knee incision with stiffness and swelling in the right knee. Right knee pain and decreased range of motion are noted. There is decreased strength in knee extension on the right, great toe extension. Patient was prescribed Norco for pain and medicinal marijuana.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Unknown Prescription of Norco: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines On-Going Management, Opioid Classifications: Short-acting/Long-acting opioids, When to Discontin.

Decision rationale: Prospective Request for Unknown Prescription of Norco is not medically necessary. The patient has been on long term opioid medication for management the patient's pain. Current evidence based guidelines recommend the discontinuation of opioid medication if there is a lack of improvement in function or improvement in pain. According to available documentation, the patient had been utilizing opioid therapy long term without documented evidence of significant improvement in pain or overall functional improvement. Furthermore, there is no indication of dosage, quantity or duration of Norco on request. For these reasons Norco is not medically necessary.

Unknown Prescription of Medical Marijuana: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Canniboids Page(s): 28.

Decision rationale: Prospective Request for Unknown Prescription of Medical Marijuana is not medically necessary per MTUS guidelines. Guidelines state that there are no quality controlled clinical data with Canniboids for chronic pain therefore the request for medicinal marijuana is not medically necessary.