MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM13-0041274		
Date Assigned:	12/20/2013	Date of Injury:	07/09/2003
Decision Date:	03/18/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/24/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/14/2013

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 Internal Medicine, has a subspecialty in Pulmonary Disease and is licensed to practice in California. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working least at 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 was a 67 year old male with a DOI of 07/09/2003. The patient has a history of hypertension and hypokalemia as noted on 08/21/2013. The patient's hypokalemia was documented as having been corrected. The patient's hypertension is noted as improved since the patient had been losing weight. The patient was managing his hypertension with hydrochlorothiazide and amlodipine. The patient was recommended to discontinue the use of amlodipine. The patient's regular heart was function noted. The patient's last documented laboratory testing was 05/15/2013.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Hydrochlorothiazide 12.5 mg: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Zipes: Braunwald's Heart Disease: A textbook of Cardiovascular Medicine, 7t ed. Chapter 38- Systemic Hypertension: Therapy.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG), Diabetes, Hypertension Treatment

Decision rationale: The request for Hydrochlorothiazide 12.5 mg is non-certified. The patient was documented to have improved blood pressure 120/70. The patient was recommended to

discontinue amlodipine. The Official Disability Guidelines list amlodipine as a 2nd line choice to address hypertension. However, the guidelines recommend the use of hydrochlorothiazide as a 3rd line choice for treatment of hypertension. No rationale was given for discontinuing the amlodipine versus the hydrochlorothiazide in a patient with history of hypokalemia. Furthermore the frequency of the requested medication has not been submitted for review. Given the information submitted for review the request for Hydrochlorothiazide 12.5 mg is non-certified.

Potassium 20mEq: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation MD Consult

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Drugs.com

Decision rationale: The request for Potassium 20mEq is non-certified. The patient had noted resolution of hypokalemia. Potassium is for the treatment of hypokalemia. Hypokalemia is often associated with prescribed diuretics such as, Hydrochlorothiazide. The patient had no documented hypokalemia submitted for review. Also, the patient's request for Hydrochlorothiazide was non-certified. Furthermore, the patient did not have current laboratory testing submitted for review addressing the patient's potassium level. Furthermore, the frequency of the requested medication was not submitted for review. Given the information submitted for review the request for Potassium 20mEq is non-certified.