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| <b>Case Number:</b>   | CM13-0041683 |                              |            |
| <b>Date Assigned:</b> | 12/20/2013   | <b>Date of Injury:</b>       | 08/04/2000 |
| <b>Decision Date:</b> | 04/18/2014   | <b>UR Denial Date:</b>       | 09/12/2013 |
| <b>Priority:</b>      | Standard     | <b>Application Received:</b> | 09/27/2013 |

### 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. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Occupational Medicine, and is licensed to practice in Hawaii. 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/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:

This patient is a 54-year-old with a date of injury of 8/4/2000. Medical documents indicate that the patient is undergoing treatment for chronic neck pain, cervicogenic headaches, upper back pain, and bilateral carpal tunnel. Treatment has included cervical fusion, bone stimulator, and multiple physical therapy sessions. Medication list includes norco 10/325mg, naproxen 550mg, topomax 50mg, atenolol (dose unspecified), and hydrochlorothiazide 12.5mg. Objective findings were mostly related to orthopedic and neurological. No vital signs (except for pain scale) were recorded on the medical documents provided. A utilization review dated 9/12/2013 non-certified the request for losartan with HCTZ.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

#### **LOSARTAN WITH HYDROCHLOROTHIAZIDE (HCTZ): Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 3 Initial Approaches to Treatment Page(s): 47. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Uptodate.com

**Decision rationale:** MTUS is silent regarding the use of losartan with HCTZ. Losartan with HCTZ is a combination drug used for the treatment of hypertension. JNC 8 defines hypertension

as Stage 1: systolic 140 to 159 mmHg or diastolic 90 to 99 mmHg. Stage 2: systolic  $\geq$ 160 or diastolic  $\geq$ 100 mmHg on two or more properly measured readings at each of two or more visits after an initial screen. The medical documents provided did not establish the diagnosis of hypertension. Progress notes did not objectively record systolic and diastolic blood pressure readings, which is critical in evaluation of hypertension. Medical records provided do not outline what lifestyle modification (weight loss, exercise, low sodium diet, etc) were tried initially and the results of those lifestyle interventions. Additionally, no documentation was provided that outlined which primary monotherapy was tried prior to advancing towards combination therapy. The patient is on naroxyn 550mg twice daily and norco 10/325mg 4-5 daily. The Initial Approaches to Treatment Chapter of the ACOEM Practice Guidelines guidelines state "Studies have shown that when NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) are used for more than a few weeks, they can retard or impair bone, muscle, and connective tissue healing and perhaps cause hypertension." The treating physician does not address NSAID related hypertension in the progress notes. The request for Losartan with HCTZ is not medically necessary or appropriate.