

Case Number:	CM13-0047956		
Date Assigned:	12/27/2013	Date of Injury:	11/12/2010
Decision Date:	04/25/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/26/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/04/2013

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 Anesthesiology, has a subspecialty in Pain Management and is licensed to practice in California. 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 40-year-old male with a 11/12/10 date of injury. At the time (10/16/13) of the request for authorization for Butrans patch 10mcg #4 and Norco 10/325 #90, there is documentation of subjective (back pain radiating from low back down both legs) and objective (loss of normal lordosis with straightening of the lumbar spine and surgical scars, Range of Motion (ROM) is restricted, paravertebral muscles spasm, tenderness and tight muscle band noted on both the sides) findings, current diagnoses (post lumbar laminectomy syndrome, lumbar radiculopathy, low back pain, and thoracic pain), and treatment to date (PT, chiropractic treatment, acupuncture, functional restoration program, and medication including Norco for over a year). Medical report identifies that the rules and regulations surrounding prescription of opioids and compliance were discussed at length. Regarding Butrans patch 10mcg #4, there is no documentation of opiate addiction or detoxification and a history of opiate addiction. Regarding Norco 10/325 #90, there is no documentation of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services with use of Norco.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

BUTRANS PATCH 10MCG #4: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Buprenorphine Page(s): 26-27.

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation of opiate addiction or chronic pain (after detoxification in patients who have a history of opiate addiction), as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of Buprenorphine. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of post lumbar laminectomy syndrome, lumbar radiculopathy, low back pain, and thoracic pain. In addition, there is documentation of chronic pain. However, there is no documentation of opiate addiction or detoxification and a history of opiate addiction. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Butrans patch 10mcg #4 is not medically necessary.

NORCO 10/325 #90: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74-80.

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines necessitate documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of opioids. MTUS-Definitions identifies that any treatment intervention should not be continued in the absence of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of post lumbar laminectomy syndrome, lumbar radiculopathy, low back pain, and thoracic pain. In addition, there is documentation of utilization of Norco for over a year. Furthermore, there is documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. However, there is no documentation of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services with use of Norco. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Norco 10/325 #90 is not medically necessary.