

Case Number:	CM14-0008792		
Date Assigned:	02/12/2014	Date of Injury:	02/09/2004
Decision Date:	06/24/2014	UR Denial Date:	01/16/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/23/2014

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 Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, 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:

This is a patient with a date of injury of 2/9/04. A utilization review determination dated 1/16/14 recommends non-certification of tramadol cream and Norco. 2/11/14 medical report identifies pain in the back 10/10. On exam, there was low back tenderness and a slow, stiff gait.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

TRAMADOL CREAM 10% #1: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines 8 C.C.R. §§9792.20 - 9792.26 MTUS (Effective July 18,).

Decision rationale: California MTUS does not specifically address topical opioids, but they note that topical analgesics are largely experimental in use with few randomized controlled trials to determine efficacy or safety. Within the documentation available for review, there is no documentation of efficacy of prior use of the medication (quantified pain relief, specific functional improvement, etc.) and a clear rationale for the use of a topical medication rather than the FDA-approved oral form for this patient. In light of the above issues, the currently requested tramadol cream is not medically necessary.

NORCO 10/325MG #90: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines 8 C.C.R. §§9792.20 - 9792.26 MTUS (Effective July 18,.

Decision rationale: California MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that, due to high abuse potential, close follow-up is recommended with documentation of analgesic effect, objective functional improvement, side effects, and discussion regarding any aberrant use. Guidelines go on to recommend discontinuing opioids if there is no documentation of improved function and pain. Within the documentation available for review, there is no indication that the Norco is improving the patient's function or pain (in terms of percent reduction in pain or reduced NRS), no documentation regarding side effects, and no discussion regarding aberrant use. Opioids should not be abruptly discontinued; however, unfortunately, there is no provision for modification of the current request. In light of the above issues, the currently requested Norco 10/325mg #90 is not medically necessary.