MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM14-0108542		
Date Assigned:	08/01/2014	Date of Injury:	06/01/2002
Decision Date:	10/03/2014	UR Denial Date:	06/30/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/11/2014

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 Occupational Medicine 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:

The applicant is a represented [redacted] employee who has filed a claim for chronic low back pain and major depressive disorder reportedly associated with an industrial injury of June 1, 2002. Thus far, the applicant has been treated with the following: Analgesic medications; attorney representations; earlier lumbar spine surgery; opioid therapy; and muscle relaxants.In a Utilization Review Report dated June 30, 2014, the claims administrator partially certified a request for bupropion (Wellbutrin), an antidepressant medication, with five refills as bupropion 300 mg #60 with no refills. The claims administrator suggested that the applicant was off of work and had deemed disabled. In a January 15, 2014 progress note, the applicant reported persistent complaints of pain. The applicant also noted that she was having issues with mood disturbance and frustration. The applicant apparently had a special-needs child at home, for whom she was responsible. The applicant stated that she was under a great deal of financial stress and that her husband was also searching for employment. The applicant stated that she was depressed and anxious. Other problems included chronic low back pain, sleep apnea, obesity, reflux, and anxiety disorder. The applicant's medication list included Neurontin, Duragesic, Cymbalta, topical compounds, Temovate, Zyrtec, BuSpar, Wellbutrin, Lioresal, and albuterol. The applicant stated she was struggling from a mood standpoint. The applicant appeared tearful and dysphoric in the clinic. The applicant was asked to continue Cymbalta, Prazosin, Wellbutrin, and BuSpar. In an earlier note dated September 9, 2013, the applicant again stated that she was having a variety of depressive symptoms and pain complaints. The applicant again expressed frustration with the Workers' Compensation system and Utilization Review system. The applicant was described as having primary diagnoses of anxiety disorder and major depressive disorder. The applicant was again asked to continue Cymbalta, Prazosin, Wellbutrin, and BuSpar. In a June 30, 2014 appeal letter, the applicant stated that the

combination of bupropion (Wellbutrin) and Cymbalta for a span of three to four months had diminished her depression to a manageable level where she could function and participate in household chores, activities of daily living, and interact with family members and friends.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Bupropion HCL 300mg Quantity 180 with 5 refills: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Bupropion (Wellbutrin) Page(s): 16.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 15 Stress Related Conditions Page(s): 402.

Decision rationale: As noted in the MTUS-adopted ACOEM Guidelines in Chapter 15, page 402, antidepressants such as bupropion "may be helpful" to alleviate symptoms of depression. In this case, the applicant has longstanding issues with depression. The applicant has seemingly successfully posited that ongoing usage of psychotropic medications, including Wellbutrin and Cymbalta, have effectively attenuated her mental health symptoms to the point where she is able to interact with family members and friends and perform some level of household chores. It does appear, thus, that bupropion (Wellbutrin) has been helpful or at least partially helpful in ameliorating the applicant's ongoing issues with depression. Continuing the same, on balance, is therefore indicated. Accordingly, the request is medically necessary.