

Case Number:	CM14-0129032		
Date Assigned:	08/18/2014	Date of Injury:	05/11/2009
Decision Date:	09/18/2014	UR Denial Date:	07/18/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/13/2014

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 Family Medicine and is licensed to practice in North Carolina. 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 claimant had an original date of injury of 5/11/2009. Current diagnoses include shoulder pain, elbow pain, trigger finger, alcohol abuse and depression. Conservative therapy and recommendations made for psychological treatment for his alcohol abuse and depression prior to consideration of any orthopedic surgical interventions. The current request is for ongoing treatment of pain with Norco.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco (Hydrocodone Bitartrate and Acetaminophen) 10/325mg with 2 refills: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, Opioid hyperalgesia.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 74-89.

Decision rationale: The California MTUS allows for the use of opioid medication, such as Norco, for the management of chronic pain and outlines clearly the documentation that would support the need for ongoing use of an opioid. These steps include documenting pain and functional improvement using validated measures at 6 months intervals, documenting the presence or absence of any adverse effects, documenting the efficacy of any other treatments and

of any other medications used in pain treatment. The medical record in this case does not use any validated method of recording the response of pain to the opioid medication or of documenting any functional improvement. It does not address the efficacy of concomitant medication therapy. Therefore, the record does not support medical necessity of ongoing opioid therapy with Norco. The original UR decision is upheld, including the caution to wean narcotics rather than discontinue treatment abruptly.