

Case Number:	CM14-0151618		
Date Assigned:	09/19/2014	Date of Injury:	10/18/2001
Decision Date:	10/22/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/28/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/17/2014

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 Neurology, has a subspecialty in Neuromuscular Medicine and is licensed to practice in New Jersey. 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 patient is a 52-year-old woman who sustained a work related injury on October 18, 2001. Subsequently, she developed chronic neck and low back pain. According to the progress report dated August 18, 2014, the patient complains of neck and low back sharp, stabbing pain, stiffness, weakness, and generalized discomfort. Her physical examination revealed reduced range of motion of the cervical and lumbosacral spines with tenderness and spasm, absent bilateral biceps and bilateral ankle deep tendon reflexes. There is a reduced bilateral straight-leg raising measurements. The patient was diagnosed with cervical spine disc syndrome with strain/sprain disorder, radiculopathy, status post laminectomy fusion surgical procedures x2, and postoperative laminectomy fusion syndrome. The provider requested authorization for Oxycontin.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Oxycontin 60ng #120 with no refills: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 75-81.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, Oxycodone as well as other short acting opioids are indicated for intermittent or breakthrough pain (page 75). It can be used in acute post operative pain. It is not recommended for chronic pain of long-term use as prescribed in this case. In addition and according to MTUS guidelines, ongoing use of opioids should follow specific rules: (a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed, and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy.(b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function.(c) Office: Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Pain assessment should include: current pain; the least reported pain over the period since last assessment; average pain; intensity of pain after taking the opioid; how long it takes for pain relief; and how long pain relief lasts. Satisfactory response to treatment may be indicated by the patient's decreased pain, increased level of function, or improved quality of life. Information from family members or other caregivers should be considered in determining the patient's response to treatment. The 4 A's for Ongoing Monitoring: Four domains have been proposed as most relevant for ongoing monitoring of chronic pain patients on opioids: pain relief, side effects, physical and psychosocial functioning, and the occurrence of any potentially aberrant (or non-adherent) drug-related behaviors. These domains have been summarized as the "4 A's" (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug taking behaviors). The monitoring of these outcomes over time should affect therapeutic decisions and provide a framework. Based on the medical records, the patient has used extremely high dose opioid analgesics that can lead to side effects and dependency. In addition, there is no clear documentation of significant pain and functional improvement with the previous use of opioids. There is no documentation breakthrough pain. Based on these findings, the prescription of Oxycontin 60 mg #120 with 6 refills is not medically necessary.