

Case Number:	CM14-0158588		
Date Assigned:	10/02/2014	Date of Injury:	03/23/2007
Decision Date:	10/30/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/05/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/26/2014

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 and 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 male patient with the date of injury of March 23, 2007. A Utilization Review was performed on September 4, 2014 and recommended non-certification of Cyclobenzaprine 7.5mg #60 and partial certification of Hydrocodone Bit-Acetaminophen 7.5-325mg #60. A Progress Report dated August 19, 2014 does not identify subjective or objective findings. Diagnoses identify complete tear lateral/recurrent tear medial meniscus left knee, chondromalacia of patella/synovitis left knee, torn ACL-PCL, instability left knee with traumatic tricompartmental osteoarthritis, extruded disc lumbar spine, and positive radiculopathy lower extremities. Treatment Plan identifies Cyclobenzaprine and Hydrocodone Bit-Acetaminophen.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Cyclobenzaprine 7.5MG #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle relaxants (for pain).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 63-66 of 127.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril), Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines support the use of nonsedating muscle relaxants to be used with caution as

a 2nd line option for the short-term treatment of acute exacerbations of pain. Guidelines go on to state that cyclobenzaprine specifically is recommended for a short course of therapy. Within the documentation available for review, there is no identification of a specific analgesic benefit or objective functional improvement as a result of the cyclobenzaprine. Additionally, it does not appear that this medication is being prescribed for the short-term treatment of an acute exacerbation, as recommended by guidelines. In the absence of such documentation, the currently requested cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril) is not medically necessary.

Hydrocodone Bit-Acetaminophen 7.5-325mg: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids for chronic pain in general conditions; Criteria for use f.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 44, 47, 75-79, 120 of 127.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for Norco (hydrocodone/acetaminophen), California Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that Norco is an opiate pain medication. 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 medication is improving the patient's function or pain (in terms of specific examples of functional improvement and percent reduction in pain or reduced NRS), no documentation regarding side effects, and no discussion regarding aberrant use. As such, there is no clear indication for ongoing use of the medication. Opioids should not be abruptly discontinued, but unfortunately, there is no provision to modify the current request to allow tapering. In light of the above issues, the currently requested Norco (hydrocodone/acetaminophen) is not medically necessary.