

Case Number:	CM14-0164835		
Date Assigned:	10/09/2014	Date of Injury:	12/16/2013
Decision Date:	11/10/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/11/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/07/2014

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 Arizona. 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:

Patient is a 31-year-old male with a date of injury of 12/16/2013. Subjective complaints are of low back pain radiating to the left leg. Pain is rated at 6-8/10. Physical exam shows tenderness over the bilateral sacroiliac joints, decreased lumbar range of motion, and positive bilateral straight leg raise test. Prior treatment includes physical therapy, activity modification, and medications. Medications included Norco, Flexeril, and Naproxen.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

One prescription of Norco 5/325mg #60 with one refill: Upheld

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

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

Decision rationale: The patient in question has been on chronic opioid therapy. The California Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines have specific recommendations for the ongoing management of opioid therapy. Clear evidence should be presented about the degree of analgesia, level of activity of daily living, adverse side effects, or aberrant drug taking behavior. While ongoing opioids may be needed for this patient, the medical record fails to provide

documentation of MTUS-recommended opioid compliance guidelines including risk assessment, attempts at weaning, and ongoing efficacy of medication. Furthermore, the records do not demonstrate improvement in function from long-term use. Therefore, the medical necessity of Norco is not established at this time.