

Case Number:	CM14-0178397		
Date Assigned:	10/31/2014	Date of Injury:	04/15/1999
Decision Date:	12/08/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/02/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/27/2014

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 and is licensed to practice in Texas. 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:

Medical records reflect the claimant is a 65 year old male who sustained a work injury on 4-15-99. Office visit on 9-9-14 notes the claimant has pain to the left knee rated as 5/10. The claimant has chronic neuropathic pain and instability. On exam, the claimant has positive patellar sign in the left knee with some edema, positive McMurray with atrophy of the left quadriceps muscle and weakness. The left knee is weak to flexion at 4+ to 5-/5. The claimant had tenderness over the medial and lateral joint lines. The claimant had Allodynia, dysesthesia and hyperesthesia around the knee. Gait is normal. The claimant has been treated with medications, physical therapy, surgery, postop physical therapy.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Senna S 1-2 tablets PO up to BID for constipation as needed #120: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 77.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: US National Library of Medicine

Decision rationale: Stool softeners are used on a short-term basis to relieve constipation by people who should avoid straining during bowel movements because of heart conditions, hemorrhoids, and other problems. They soften stools, making them easier to pass. The claimant has been on opioids, which cause secondary constipation. However, since the Norco provided is not supported, then the use of this medication is not supported as medically necessary.

Norco 10/325mg #150: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, specific drug list.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines opioids Page(s): 74-96. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) pain chapter - opioids

Decision rationale: Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines as well as ODG notes that ongoing use of opioids require 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 nonadherent) 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). There is an absence in documentation noting that the claimant has functional improvement with this medication. Quantification of improvement, if any, or any documentation that this medication improves psychosocial functioning. Therefore, the medical necessity of this request is not established.