

Case Number:	CM14-0185063		
Date Assigned:	11/12/2014	Date of Injury:	04/27/2002
Decision Date:	12/15/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/29/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/06/2014

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 Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation 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 31 year-old patient sustained an injury on 4/27/02 while employed by [REDACTED]. Request(s) under consideration include MS Contin 30mg, #90. Diagnoses include discogenic low back pain s/p discectomy. Report of 10/14/14 from the provider noted the patient with chronic ongoing low back pain and left ankle weakness post lumbar surgery. Low back pain is persistent and radiates to left posterior thigh and calf. The patient was reported to be doing well on medication of 2 MS Contin/day, decreasing pain from 8/10 to 4/10 with better overall quality of life. Exam showed unchanged findings. The request(s) for MS Contin 30mg, #90 was modified to #48 for weaning on 10/28/14 citing guidelines criteria and lack of medical necessity.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MS Contin 30mg, #90: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74-96.

Decision rationale: Previous utilization review has recommended tapering off opioids due to a lack of documented functional improvement. Per the MTUS Guidelines cited, opioid use in the

setting of chronic, non-malignant, or neuropathic pain is controversial. Patients on opioids should be routinely monitored for signs of impairment and use of opioids in patients with chronic pain should be reserved for those with improved functional outcomes attributable to their use, in the context of an overall approach to pain management that also includes non-opioid analgesics, adjuvant therapies, psychological support, and active treatments (e.g., exercise). Submitted documents show no evidence that the treating physician is prescribing opioids in accordance to change in pain relief, functional goals with demonstrated improvement in daily activities, decreased in medical utilization or change in work status. There is no evidence presented of random drug testing or utilization of pain contract to adequately monitor for narcotic safety, efficacy, and compliance. The MTUS provides requirements of the treating physician to assess and document for functional improvement with treatment intervention and maintenance of function that would otherwise deteriorate if not supported. From the submitted reports, there is no demonstrated evidence of specific functional benefit derived from the continuing use of opioids with persistent severe pain for this chronic 2002 injury without acute flare, new injury, or progressive deterioration. The MS Contin 30mg, #90 is not medically necessary and appropriate.