

Case Number:	CM14-0186176		
Date Assigned:	11/14/2014	Date of Injury:	05/13/2003
Decision Date:	12/16/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/08/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/07/2014

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 Preventive Medicine, 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 62-year-old male with a 5/13/03 date of injury. At the time (10/6/14) of the request for authorization for Norco 5/325 mg #15 and Tramadol ER 150 mg #35, there is documentation of subjective (right knee locks and shooting pain in left knee) and objective (edema noted in the lower extremities bilaterally, effusion at both knees, crepitus noted bilateral knees, decreased left knee range of motion, knee extension is 3+/5, decreased sensation to light touch noted in the right knee, McMurray's test is positive bilaterally, Lachman's test is positive bilaterally, anterior drawer test is positive bilaterally, and posterior drawer test is positive bilaterally) findings, current diagnoses (localized primary osteoarthritis of lower leg and derangement of medial meniscus not elsewhere classified and not otherwise specified), and treatment to date (medication including Norco and Tramadol for at least a year). There is no documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects; and functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications with Norco and Tramadol use to date.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 5/325 MG #15: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74-80. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: Title 8, California Code of Regulations, section 9792.20

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines necessitate documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of opioids. MTUS-Definitions identifies that any treatment intervention should not be continued in the absence of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of localized primary osteoarthritis of lower leg and derangement of medial meniscus not elsewhere classified and not otherwise specified. However, there is no documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. In addition, given documentation of treatment with Norco for at least a year, there is no documentation of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications with Norco use to date. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Norco 5/325 mg #15 is not medically necessary.

Tramadol ER 150 MG #35: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74-80;113. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: Title 8, California Code of Regulations, section 9792.20

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects; as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of Opioids. In addition, specifically regarding Tramadol, MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guideline identifies documentation of moderate to severe pain and Tramadol used as a second-line treatment (alone or in combination with first-line drugs), as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of Tramadol. MTUS-Definitions identifies that any treatment intervention should not be continued in the absence of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services. Within the medical information available

for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of localized primary osteoarthritis of lower leg and derangement of medial meniscus not elsewhere classified and not otherwise specified. In addition, there is documentation of moderate to severe pain and that Tramadol is being used as a second-line treatment. However, there is no documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. In addition, given documentation of treatment with Tramadol for at least a year, there is no documentation of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications with Tramadol use to date. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Tramadol ER 150 mg #35 is not medically necessary.