

Case Number:	CM14-0023488		
Date Assigned:	06/11/2014	Date of Injury:	07/31/2006
Decision Date:	08/08/2014	UR Denial Date:	02/19/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/25/2014

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 Anesthesia, has a subspecialty in Acupuncture and Pain 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:

The 56 y/o female injured worker with date of injury 7/31/06 with related left hand pain, bilateral SI joint pain, lower back pain, and muscle spasm. Per progress report dated 5/2/14, the injured worker presented with post-laminectomy syndrome, bilateral sacroiliac joint dysfunction with lower extremity radiculopathy, and painful retained lumbar hardware. She noted that the pain from the hardware was aggravating her muscle spasm. MRI of the lumbar spine dated 4/25/14 revealed status post L4-L5 ALIF with right L4 and L5 pedicle screws seen; degenerative changes of the lumbar spine without canal stenosis; and neural foraminal narrowing L3-L4 and L5-S1, suspected to be moderate at L5-S1. Treatment to date has included injections, physical therapy, and medication management. The date of UR decision was 2/19/14.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

VICODIN 7.5/750 OR 7.5/300MG #120: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 80-82.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 78, 91.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines page 78 regarding on-going management of opioids, 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 any aberrant drug-taking behaviors). The monitoring of these outcomes over time should affect therapeutic decisions and provide a framework for documentation of the clinical use of these controlled drugs. Review of the available medical records reveal no documentation to support the medical necessity of Vicodin nor any documentation addressing the '4 A's' domains, which is a recommended practice for the on-going management of opioids. Specifically, the notes do not appropriately review and document pain relief, functional status improvement, appropriate medication use, or side effects. The MTUS considers this list of criteria for initiation and continuation of opioids in the context of efficacy required to substantiate medical necessity, and they do not appear to have been addressed by the treating physician in the documentation available for review. Furthermore, efforts to rule out aberrant behavior (e.g. CURES report, urine drug screen, opiate agreement) are necessary to assure safe usage and establish medical necessity. There is no documentation comprehensively addressing this concern in the records available for my review. As MTUS recommends to discontinue opioids if there is no overall improvement in function, the request is not medically necessary.

SOMA 350MG #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle relaxants (for pain), Soma Page(s): 128.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Carisoprodol Page(s): 29.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines page 29, Soma is not recommended. This medication is not indicated for long-term use. Carisoprodol (Soma) is a commonly prescribed, centrally acting skeletal muscle relaxant whose primary active metabolite is meprobamate (a schedule-IV controlled substance). Carisoprodol is now scheduled in several states but not on a federal level. It has been suggested that the main effect is due to generalized sedation and treatment of anxiety. Abuse has been noted for sedative and relaxant effects. In regular abusers the main concern is the accumulation of meprobamate. Carisoprodol abuse has also been noted in order to augment or alter effects of other drugs. As this medication is not recommended by MTUS, it is not medically necessary.