

Case Number:	CM14-0031639		
Date Assigned:	06/20/2014	Date of Injury:	08/27/2007
Decision Date:	07/21/2014	UR Denial Date:	03/11/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/12/2014

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 Occupational 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 applicant is a represented [REDACTED] employee who has filed a claim for chronic low back pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of August 27, 2007. Thus far, the claimant has been treated with the following: Analgesic medications; attorney representations; adjuvant medications; unspecified amounts of chiropractic manipulative therapy; and opioid therapy. In a Utilization Review Report dated March 10, 2014, the claims administrator partially certified a request for gabapentin, stating that it is incumbent upon the attending provider to document ongoing improvements in pain and function with gabapentin. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. In a progress note dated June 19, 2014, the applicant presented with 6-7/10 pain. The applicant apparently stated that ongoing usage of OxyContin and oxycodone was allowing him to perform household chores, cook and care for household pets, and run daily errands. The applicant's medication list included oxycodone, OxyContin, and gabapentin. OxyContin and oxycodone were refilled. The applicant's work status was not provided. In an earlier note of May 22, 2014, the applicant was again described as reporting 8-9/10 pain. It was again stated that usage of oxycodone and OxyContin had been beneficial for the applicant. There was little or no mention made of gabapentin on this occasion, however. In a March 27, 2014 progress note, the applicant again reported highly variable pain of 5 to 8-9/10. It was again stated that ongoing usage of OxyContin and oxycodone was ameliorating the same and facilitating the applicant's ability to perform errands. On March 27, 2014, the applicant did in fact receive a refill of gabapentin, along with refills of OxyContin and oxycodone. On this occasion, as with the other occasions, the attending provider did state that usage of OxyContin and oxycodone was ameliorating his ability to perform household chores, cook and care for animals, and run errands. There was no discussion of how or if gabapentin was beneficial.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Gabapentin 300 mg, QTY: 120 with 5 refills: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Antiepilepsy Drugs Page(s): 18.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines page 19, Gabapentin section. Page(s): 19.

Decision rationale: As noted on page 19 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, it is incumbent upon the attending provider to document improvements in pain or function at each visit in applicants using gabapentin, an anticonvulsant adjuvant medication. In this case, however, the attending provider has not incorporated any discussion of medication efficacy into his recommendation to continue gabapentin. There is no mention of gabapentin specifically benefiting the applicant in any way, on any progress note referenced above. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.