MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM14-0048770		
Date Assigned:	06/25/2014	Date of Injury:	01/29/2014
Decision Date:	07/31/2014	UR Denial Date:	03/24/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/27/2014

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, has a subspecialty in Pain Management, 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 injured worker is a 46 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on January 29, 2014. The injury occurred in the context of the patient sleeping on a ramp and falling on his bottom and the right side of his body. The covered body regions include the cervical spine, shoulders, low back, hips and ankle. The disputed issues include a request for Norco, the aquatic therapy exercises at a [redacted] between March and May 2014, and one compact disc for breathing type meditation and relaxation techniques.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 5/325mg #90: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints Page(s): 308,346,376,Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines <Opioid Criteria Section> Page(s): 76-80.

Decision rationale: According to the MTUS Guidelines, the use of narcotic pain medication requires documentation of analgesic efficacy, monitoring for aberrant behaviors, functional benefit, and monitoring for adverse side effects. The patient was seen in the pain management clinic on February 18, 2014 area at that time the patient was recommended to try Norco for

breakthrough pain. A subsequent follow-up visit on March 14, 2014 does not document the functional efficacy of narcotic pain medication. The provider did perform a urine drug screen which is appropriate for screening for aberrancy. Given the guidelines, the request for Norco 5/325mg #90 is not medically necessary at this time.

Unknown daily Aquatic Therapy exercises at a gym or [redacted]: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints Page(s): 178.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Gym Membership Guidelines.

Decision rationale: The California MTUS does not specifically comment on gym memberships. The Official Disability Guidelines specify that gym memberships are not recommended as there is no direct supervision and feedback provided to the requesting provider. Therefore the request for aquatic therapy at a gym is not medically necessary.

(1) CD for breathing type meditation as a relaxation technique: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 2 General Approach to Initial Assessment and Documentation.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines <Psychology Section> Page(s): 102.

Decision rationale: In the case of this request, it is not evident what the contents of the compact disc containing breathing type meditation and relaxation techniques. Relaxation therapies and breathing type meditation are often taught in the context of pain psychology. If the patient truly warrants this type of psychological intervention, the request should be made for psychological consultation. The clinical benefit of having a patient watch or listen to a compact disc is unclear. Although it may be helpful, it is not recommended as medically necessary, and is not considered standard of care. Therefore one CD for breathing type meditation is not medically necessary.