

Case Number:	CM14-0058211		
Date Assigned:	07/09/2014	Date of Injury:	10/18/2006
Decision Date:	08/15/2014	UR Denial Date:	03/26/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/28/2014

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 Anesthesiology 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 42-year-old male with a 10/18/06 date of injury. At the time (3/26/14) of request for authorization for Retrospective - Hydrocodone / APAP 10/325mg, #180, no refills, there is documentation of subjective (low back pain) and objective (TTP over lumbar facets and worsened and reproducible concordant axial low back pain with rotation and hyperextension of torso) findings, current diagnoses (lumbar radiculopathy, neuritis, degenerative facet disease, lumbar, lumbar disc displacement, herniation, back pain lumbar, and degenerative disc disease), and treatment to date (medications (including ongoing treatment with Hydrocodone-acetaminophen with improvement in daily function with medications)). 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.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Retrospective - Hydrocodone / APAP 10/325mg, #180, no refills: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Hydrocodone, See Opioids. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) 2014 Pain, Opioids from Chronic Pain.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids
Page(s): 74-80.

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 lumbar radiculopathy, neuritis, degenerative facet disease, lumbar, lumbar disc displacement, herniation, back pain lumbar, and degenerative disc disease. In addition, given documentation of ongoing treatment with Hydrocodone / APAP 10/325mg, with improvement in daily function, there is documentation of functional benefit and improvement as an increase in activity tolerance as a result of Hydrocodone / APAP 10/325mg use to date. 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. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Retrospective - Hydrocodone / APAP 10/325mg, #180, no refills is not medically necessary.