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| Case Number: | CM14-0063351 | | |
| Date Assigned: | 07/11/2014 | Date of Injury: | 05/28/2013 |
| Decision Date: | 09/09/2014 | UR Denial Date: | 04/24/2014 |
| Priority: | Standard | Application Received: | 05/05/2014 |

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 44-year-old male with a 5/28/13 date of injury. At the time (3/14/14) of the request for authorization for Norco 5/325mg Q12 (every 12) prn (as needed), #60 x 1 and Methoderm topical medication x 2, there is documentation of subjective (pain in the right knee) and objective (grade 2 tenderness to palpation, which has decreased from grade 3 on the last visit and restricted range of motion) findings. Current diagnoses are: abdominal pain secondary to medication, right knee strain/sprain, right knee meniscal tear per patient history, hypertrophic plica right knee failed conservative treatment, and status post right knee arthroscopic surgery effusion. Treatment to date include: medication, including ongoing use of opioids. Regarding Norco 5/325mg Q12 (every 12) prn (as needed), #60 x 1, 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; 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 use of Norco. Regarding Methoderm topical medication x 2, there is no documentation of neuropathic pain and that trial of antidepressants and anticonvulsants have failed.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 5/325mg Q12 (every 12) prn (as needed), #60 x 1: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, specific drug list.

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 abdominal pain secondary to medication, right knee strain/sprain, right knee meniscal tear per patient history, hypertrophic plica right knee failed conservative treatment, and status post right knee arthroscopic surgery effusion. In addition, there is documentation of ongoing use of opioids. 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 ongoing use of Norco, 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 use of Norco. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Norco 5/325mg Q12 (every 12) prn (as needed), #60 x 1 is not medically necessary.

Menthoderm Topical medication x 2: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics Page(s): 111-112. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: <http://www.drugs.com/cdi/menthoder-cream.html>.

Decision rationale: Medical Treatment Guideline identifies Menthoder-cream as a topical analgesic containing Methyl Salicylate and Menthol. MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation of neuropathic pain when trial of antidepressants and anticonvulsants have failed, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of topical analgesics. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of abdominal pain secondary to medication, right knee strain/sprain, right knee meniscal tear per patient history, hypertrophic plica right knee failed conservative treatment, and status post right knee arthroscopic surgery effusion. However, there is no documentation of neuropathic pain and that trial of antidepressants and anticonvulsants have failed. Therefore,

based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Methoderm topical medication x 2 is not medically necessary.