

Case Number:	CM14-0069083		
Date Assigned:	07/14/2014	Date of Injury:	06/18/2013
Decision Date:	09/15/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/08/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/14/2014

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 36-year-old male with a 6/18/13 date of injury and status post open reduction with revision internal fixation of left distal tibial nonunion 10/30/13. At the time (4/28/14) of request for authorization for Norco 10/325mg #60 with 3 refills, there is documentation of subjective (significant left ankle pain with limited motion) and objective (decreased range of motion of the left ankle, swelling along the medial and lateral ankle, tightness along the calf muscle on passive ankle dorsiflexion, diminished sensation along the left dorsal foot and ankle region, diminished left ankle reflex) findings, current diagnoses (status post open reduction internal fixation of the left tibia and fibular fracture), and treatment to date (physical therapy and ongoing therapy with Norco with decrease in pain levels). 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; 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 as a result of use of Norco.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 10/325mg #60 with 3 refills: Upheld

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

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 a diagnosis of status post open reduction internal fixation of the left tibia and fibular fracture. 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. In addition, despite documentation of ongoing treatment with Norco with decrease in pain levels, 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 as a result of use of Norco. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Norco 10/325mg #60 with 3 refills is not medically necessary.