

Case Number:	CM14-0080109		
Date Assigned:	07/18/2014	Date of Injury:	02/27/2004
Decision Date:	09/08/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/09/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/30/2014

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:

This is a 44-year-old male with a 2/27/04 date of injury. He was seen on 4/21/14 for complaints of low back pain, 6/10 with radiation down the posterior left leg and numbness in the bilateral feet. He also complained of neck pain 7/10 with tingling in the left shoulder. He had a fusion at L4/L5 18 months ago. Exam findings revealed decreased sensation in the left L4/L5/S1 dermatomes. He was noted to have 5-/5 strength in the left tibialis anterior, EHL, and inversion, as well as the right tibialis anterior. Otherwise strength is normal in the lower extremities. His gait is antalgic. He was resistant to trying acupuncture or therapy. A progress note dated 5/19/14 stated the patient was taking Senna for opiate induced constipation, which has been helping. He is noted to be on Percocet, and MS Contin for pain control. Treatment to date: PT, medications, The UR determination dated 5/9/14 denied the request for a follow up visit, as there was a lack of documentation with regard to specific changes in symptoms and/or work restrictions. The request for Senna was denied for unknown reasons.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Follow up in 4 weeks: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain Chapter Office Visit.

Decision rationale: CA MTUS does not address this issue. ODG states that evaluation and management (E&M) outpatient visits to the offices of medical doctor(s) play a critical role in the proper diagnosis and return to function of an injured worker, to monitor the patient's progress, and make any necessary modifications to the treatment plan. The determination of necessity for an office visit requires individualized case review and assessment, being ever mindful that the best patient outcomes are achieved with eventual patient independence from the health care system through self care as soon as clinically feasible. This patient is being seen for ongoing pain management and is taking narcotics which require constant monitoring and dose adjusting. Therefore, the request for a follow up appointment was medically reasonable.

Senna #60: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: FDA (Senna).

Decision rationale: CA MTUS and ODG do not address this issue. The FDA states that Senna is indicated for short-term treatment of constipation; preoperative and pre-radiographic bowel evacuation or for procedures involving GI tract. This patient is on narcotic medication for pain control and a GI regimen to prevent opiate induced constipation is appropriate. In addition, this medication was noted to be helping the patient in a recent progress note dated 5/19/14. Therefore, the request for Senna #60 was medically reasonable.