

Case Number:	CM14-0159727		
Date Assigned:	10/03/2014	Date of Injury:	08/18/2011
Decision Date:	01/29/2015	UR Denial Date:	09/23/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/29/2014

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 Rehab 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 28-year-old female with an 8/18/11 date of injury. At the time (9/5/14) of request for authorization for Norco 10/325mg #60 and Ibuprofen 800mg #60, there is documentation of subjective (persistent shoulder pain and neck pain) and objective (tenderness to palpation over C7-T1, limited range of motion of the cervical spine, tenderness to palpation over the right shoulder and muscle spasms, and decreased range of motion of the right shoulder) findings, current diagnoses (cervical strain, strain unspecified of the back, shoulder/upper arm strain, and acute pain due to trauma), and treatment to date (TENS unit and medications (Norco and Ibuprofen since at least 6/20/14)). Regarding Norco 10/325mg #60, 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 Norco use to date. Regarding Ibuprofen 800mg #60, 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 Ibuprofen use to date.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 10/325mg #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 80.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74-80. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline for Medical Evidence: Title 8, California Code of Regulations, section 9792.20

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 cervical strain, strain unspecified of the back, shoulder/upper arm strain, and acute pain due to trauma. 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, given documentation of ongoing treatment with 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 as a result of Norco use to date. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Norco 10/325 #60 is not medically necessary.

Ibuprofen 800mg #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 22, 7.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) Page(s): 67-68. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline for Medical Evidence: Title 8, California Code of Regulations, section 9792.20

Decision rationale: MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation of moderate to severe osteoarthritis pain, acute low back pain, chronic low back pain, or exacerbations of chronic pain, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of NSAIDs. 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 cervical strain, strain unspecified of the back, shoulder/upper arm strain, and acute pain due to trauma. However, given documentation of ongoing treatment with Ibuprofen, 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 Ibuprofen use to date.

Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Ibuprofen 800mg #60 is not medically necessary.