

Case Number:	CM14-0178280		
Date Assigned:	11/07/2014	Date of Injury:	11/01/2009
Decision Date:	01/15/2015	UR Denial Date:	09/24/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/27/2014

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 Emergency Medicine and is licensed to practice in New York. 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:

The patient is a 53-year-old female who was injured on November 1, 2009. The patient continued to experience left wrist/hand pain, left shoulder pain, and left elbow pain. Physical examination was notable for diminished sensation left median nerve distribution, tenderness left shoulder, decreased range of motion left shoulder, and spasm lumbar paraspinal musculature. Diagnoses included status post left carpal tunnel release, left shoulder impingement, and bilateral foraminal stenosis. Treatment included surgery, medications, and physical therapy. Request for authorization for Hydrocodone 10 mg was submitted for consideration.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Hydrocodone 10mg: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pain Interventions and Guidelines Page(s): 74-96.

Decision rationale: Hydrocodone is an opioid medication. Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that opioids are not recommended as a first line therapy. Opioid should be part of a treatment plan specific for the patient and should follow criteria for use. Criteria for use

include establishment of a treatment plan, determination if pain is nociceptive or neuropathic, failure of pain relief with non-opioid analgesics, setting of specific functional goals, and opioid contract with agreement for random drug testing. If analgesia is not obtained, opioids should be discontinued. The patient should be screened for likelihood that he or she could be weaned from the opioids if there is no improvement in pain or function. It is recommended for short-term use if first-line options, such as acetaminophen or NSAIDS have failed. In this case the quantity of requested medication is not documented. In addition the patient has been taking Hydrocodone since at least April 2014 and had not obtained analgesia. Criteria for long-term opioid use have not been met. This request is not medically necessary.