

Case Number:	CM14-0210169		
Date Assigned:	12/23/2014	Date of Injury:	05/25/2005
Decision Date:	02/17/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/08/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/15/2014

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 Internal 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 45 year old female payment specialist (sedentary work) with a date of injury of 05/25/2005. She has chronic neck pain and upper extremity pain from repetitive stress injury. In 03/2006 she was P&S. On 08/14/2006 she fell and had low back pain. In 02/2007 she had cervical strain, lumbar strain and bilateral upper extremity pain. On 06/10/2010 she was not taking opiates. She had neck pain that at times radiated to both upper extremities. She had some stiffness of the lumbar spine that was worse with carrying things. She has been treated with opiates (Norco) since at least 04/2014. In 09/2014 a further request for Norco was modified for weaning. Tylenol #3 was prescribed. On 11/24/2014 she reported a flare up of her pain that was getting back to her baseline. She had depression and balance issues. She has been treated with acupuncture, physical therapy, activity modification and medication. She was morbidly obese and had an antalgic gait. She remains P&S as of 03/2006 and has not returned to work.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tylenol #3-Acetaminophen with Codeine #30: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, On-going Management Page(s): 78-79.

Decision rationale: According to the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, page 78, "4) On-Going Management. Actions Should Include:(a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed, and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy. (b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. (c) Office: Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Pain assessment should include: current pain; the least reported pain over the period since last assessment; average pain; intensity of pain after taking the opioid; how long it takes for pain relief; and how long pain relief lasts. Satisfactory response to treatment may be indicated by the patient's decreased pain, increased level of function, or improved quality of life. Information from family members or other caregivers should be considered in determining the patient's response to treatment. The 4 A's for Ongoing Monitoring: Four domains have been proposed as most relevant for ongoing monitoring of chronic pain patients on opioids: pain relief, side effects, physical and psychosocial functioning, and the occurrence of any potentially aberrant (or nonadherent) drug-related behaviors. These domains have been summarized as the "4 A's" (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug taking behaviors). The monitoring of these outcomes over time should affect therapeutic decisions and provide a framework for documentation of the clinical use of these controlled drugs. (Passik, 2000) (d) Home: To aid in pain and functioning assessment, the patient should be requested to keep a pain diary that includes entries such as pain triggers, and incidence of end-of-dose pain. It should be emphasized that using this diary will help in tailoring the opioid dose. This should not be a requirement for pain management. (e) Use of drug screening or inpatient treatment with issues of abuse, addiction, or poor pain control. (f) Documentation of misuse of medications (doctor-shopping, uncontrolled drug escalation, drug diversion). (g) Continuing review of overall situation with regard to nonopioid means of pain control. (h) Consideration of a consultation with a multidisciplinary pain clinic if doses of opioids are required beyond what is usually required for the condition or pain does not improve on opioids in 3 months. Consider a psych consult if there is evidence of depression, anxiety or irritability. Consider an addiction medicine consult if there is evidence of substance misuse." There is no documentation of any functional improvement since taking opiates in 04/2014. There is insufficient documentation to substantiate that the above criteria for on-going opiate treatment have been met. Therefore, this request is not medically necessary.