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| Case Number: | CM14-0218006 | | |
| Date Assigned: | 01/07/2015 | Date of Injury: | 09/18/2009 |
| Decision Date: | 04/07/2015 | UR Denial Date: | 12/22/2014 |
| Priority: | Standard | Application Received: | 12/30/2014 |

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. 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/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:

State(s) of Licensure: Massachusetts

Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, Pain Management

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 injured worker is a 74-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 9/18/09. He has reported back pain. The diagnoses have included lumbar disc degeneration, lumbagia and lumbar radiculitis. Treatment to date has included medications, diagnostics and Home Exercise Program (HEP). Currently, per progress note dated 12/15/15, the injured worker complains of back pain, not sleeping due to the pain and left leg and foot radiculopathy symptoms continue. The back pain was rated 5-6/10 with maximum pain at 7-8/10 and minimum pain 3-4/10 which prevents sleep and effects activities of daily living (ADL's) and work. He reports improvement in pain with medications and laying flat and worsens with climbing, walking, bending or stooping. He states that associated symptoms are leg pain, pain, pain with walking and leg parasthesias. Current medications included Motrin, Tramadol, Terazosin, Atenolol, Methocarbamol and Mirapex. Work status was retired. On 12/22/14 Utilization Review non-certified a request for Motrin 400mg #100 refills 3, Nortriptyline 10mg #30 refills 3, and Tramadol 50mg #100 refills 3, noting the (MTUS) Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule chronic pain Opioids was cited, (MTUS) Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule chronic pain Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) pages 67-68 was cited and chronic pain opioids pages 93-94 were cited.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Motrin 400mg #100 refills 3: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDS Page(s): 67, 70-73.

Decision rationale: According to the MTUS Anti-inflammatories are the traditional first line of treatment, to reduce pain so activity and functional restoration can resume, but long-term use may not be warranted. (Van Tulder-Cochrane, 2000) Recommended with cautions below. Disease-State Warnings for all NSAIDs: All NSAIDs have [U.S. Boxed Warning]: for associated risk of adverse cardiovascular events, including, MI, stroke, and new onset or worsening of pre-existing hypertension. NSAIDs should never be used right before or after a heart surgery (CABG; coronary artery bypass graft). NSAIDs can cause ulcers and bleeding in the stomach and intestines at any time during treatment (FDA Medication Guide). See NSAIDs, GI Symptoms and Cardiovascular Risks. Other disease-related concerns (non-boxed warnings): Hepatic: Use with caution in injured workers with moderate hepatic impairment and not recommended for injured workers with severe hepatic impairment. Borderline elevations of one or more liver enzymes may occur in up to 15% of injured workers taking NSAIDs. Renal: Use of NSAIDs may compromise renal function. FDA Medication Guide is provided by FDA mandate on all prescriptions dispensed for NSAIDs. Routine Suggested Monitoring: Package inserts for NSAIDs recommend periodic lab monitoring of a CBC and chemistry profile (including liver and renal function tests). There has been a recommendation to measure liver transaminases within 4 to 8 weeks after starting therapy, but the interval of repeating lab tests after this treatment duration has not been established. Routine blood pressure monitoring is recommended. Overall Dosing Recommendation: It is generally recommended that the lowest effective dose be used for all NSAIDs for the shortest duration of time consistent with the individual injured worker treatment goals. According to the documents available for review, it appears that the injured worker is taking this medication for long-term therapy of a chronic condition. Given the increased risks associated with long-term use of this medication and no documented evidence that the lowest possible dose is being used for the shortest period of time, the requirements for treatment have not been met and medical necessity has not been established.

Nortriptyline 10mg #30 refills 3: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDs Page(s): 67-68.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Tricyclics Page(s): 13.

Decision rationale: According to the MTUS, Tricyclics are recommended as a first line option for neuropathic pain, and as a possibility for non-neuropathic pain. (Feuerstein, 1997) (Perrot, 2006) Tricyclics are generally considered a first-line agent unless they are ineffective, poorly tolerated, or contraindicated. The current request appears to be consistent with the MTUS

guidelines. Therefore, at this time, the requirements for treatment have been met and medical necessity has been established.

Tramadol 50mg #100 refills 3: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 93-94.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74-97.

Decision rationale: According to the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines section on Opioids, On-Going Management, p 74-97, (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 injured worker'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 injured worker'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 injured workers 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 injured worker 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 uninjured worker 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 non-opioid 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. Additionally, the MTUS states that continued use of opioids requires (a) the injured worker has returned to work, (b) the injured worker has improved functioning and pain. There is no current documentation of baseline pain, pain score with use of opioids, functional improvement on current regimen, side effects or review of potentially aberrant drug taking behaviors as outlined in the MTUS and as required for ongoing treatment. Therefore, at this time, the requirements for treatment have not been met and medical necessity has not been established.