

Case Number:	CM14-0067929		
Date Assigned:	07/11/2014	Date of Injury:	10/29/2011
Decision Date:	02/13/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/02/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/12/2014

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, has a subspecialty in Rheumatology and is licensed to practice in Maryland. 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 35 year old male with date of injury 10/29/11. The mechanism of injury is stated as putting plaster on a wall. The patient has complained of neck pain, right shoulder and right wrist pain since the date of injury. He has been treated with cervical spine fusion, physical therapy and medications. There are no radiographic reports included for review. Objective: decreased and painful range of motion of the cervical spine, tenderness to palpation of the right paraspinous cervical musculature, decreased and painful range of motion of the thoracic spine, tenderness to palpation of the right paraspinous thoracic musculature, decreased and painful range of motion of the lumbar spine, tenderness to palpation of the bilateral paraspinous musculature. Diagnoses: status post cervical fusion, thoracic sprain, cervical sprain, lumbar spine sprain/strain. Treatment plan and request: Norco.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 10/325mg 1 four times a day as needed QTY: 120, wean with target of completely off medication, recommended duration is 2 months: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, Criteria for use of opioids, Weaning of medications Pag.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, criteria for use Page(s): 76-85, 88-89.

Decision rationale: This 35 year old male has complained of neck pain, right shoulder and right wrist pain since date of injury 10/29/11. He has been treated with cervical spine fusion, physical therapy and medications to include opioids since at least 11/2013. The current request is for Norco. No treating physician reports adequately assess the patient with respect to function, specific benefit, return to work, signs of abuse or treatment alternatives other than opioids. There is no evidence that the treating physician is prescribing opioids according to the MTUS section cited above which recommends prescribing according to function, with specific functional goals, return to work, random drug testing, opioid contract and documentation of failure of prior non-opioid therapy. On the basis of this lack of documentation and failure to adhere to the MTUS guidelines, is not indicated as medically necessary.