

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0003504		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	01/14/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	10/13/1996
<b>Decision Date:</b>	03/09/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	12/23/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	01/07/2015

### 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: North Carolina

Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

### CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This then said 64 year old female sustained a work related injury on 10/13/1996. According to a progress report dated 09/12/2014, diagnoses included cervical spondylosis without myelopathy, cervical radiculopathy, postlaminectomy syndrome lumbar region and lumbosacral spondylosis without myelopathy. Medication regimen included MS Contin 100mg SR take one by mouth every six hours. The injured worker complained of pain in the neck, shoulder, back and hips. Pain was rate 8 on a scale of 0-10. Symptoms were noted to be gradually worsening. According to the documentation, pain medications allowed her to be up more, functioning and able to do some light house work and walk up stairs to apartment. Urine drug screening or a signed pain contract was not submitted for review. On 12/23/2014, Utilization Review modified 120 tablets of MS Contin 100mg to 100 tablets of MS Contin 100mg. According to the Utilization Review physician, compliance to the medication prescription was not known. Improved ability to perform normal daily activities, improved quality of life or ability to function was not mentioned. There was no documented pain contract, prior urine drug screens or CURES report suggesting lack of drug misuse/abuse noted in the submitted records. Guidelines recommend that the dosing should not exceed 120mg oral per day. The injured worker medication is calculated at 400mg per day. Guidelines cited for this review included California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule Neck and Upper Back Complaints, Low Back Complaints and Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, Opioids. The decision was appealed for an Independent Medical Review.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**120 Tablets of MS Contin 100 mg: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 8 Neck and Upper Back Complaints, Chapter 12 Low Back Complaints, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines opioids Page(s): 76-84.

**Decision rationale:** The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on opioids states for ongoing management: 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 non-adherent) 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 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. Consider an addiction medicine consult if there is evidence of substance misuse. When to Continue Opioids(a) If the patient has returned to work.(b) If the patient has improved functioning and pain(Washington, 2002) (Colorado, 2002) (Ontario, 2000) (VA/DoD, 2003) (Maddox-AAPM/APS, 1997) (Wisconsin, 2004) (Warfield, 2004).The long-term use of this medication class is not recommended per the California MTUS unless there documented evidence of benefit with measurable outcome measures and improvement in function. There is no documentation of subjective improvement in pain such as VAS scores. There is also no objective measure of improvement in function. The documentation simply states the medication improves function and allows the patient to do some household

chores. For these reasons the criteria set forth above of ongoing and continued used of opioids have not been met. Therefore the request is not certified.