

Case Number:	CM15-0102216		
Date Assigned:	06/04/2015	Date of Injury:	08/17/2009
Decision Date:	07/08/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/11/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/27/2015

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: Texas, California
 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:

The injured worker is a(n) 52 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 8/17/09. He reported pain in his neck and lower back. The injured worker was diagnosed as having lumbar degenerative disc disease, lumbar radiculopathy, cervical degenerative disc disease and lumbar stenosis. Treatment to date has included epidural steroid injections x 2 with 50% relief and physical therapy. Current medications include Oxycodone and Methadone (since at least 10/29/14), Xanax, Baclofen, Ambien, Trazodone, Zoloft, Wellbutrin and Effexor. As of the PR2 dated 4/29/15, the injured worker reports pain in his lower back, right hip and legs. He rates his pain 6/10 at best and 10/10 at worse. He also indicated increased constipation. Objective findings include lumbar flexion 75 degrees and extension 20 degrees and abnormal heel to toe walking. The treating physician requested to continue Oxycodone 10mg #120 and Methadone 10mg #240. The patient has had urine drug screen test on 4/29/15. A recent urine drug screen report was not specified in the records provided.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Oxycodone HCL 10 mg #120: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines opioids Page(s): 124.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, criteria for use: page 76-80 CRITERIA FOR USE OF OPIOIDS Therapeutic Trial of Opioids.

Decision rationale: Request: Oxycodone HCL 10 mg #120. Oxycodone HCL contains is an opioid analgesic. According to CA MTUS guidelines cited below, "A therapeutic trial of opioids should not be employed until the patient has failed a trial of non-opioid analgesics. Before initiating therapy, the patient should set goals, and the continued use of opioids should be contingent on meeting these goals." The records provided do not specify that patient has set goals regarding the use of opioid analgesic. A treatment failure with non-opioid analgesics is not specified in the records provided. Other criteria for ongoing management of opioids are: "The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. Continuing review of the overall situation with regard to nonopioid means of pain control. Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Consider the use of a urine drug screen to assess for the use or the presence of illegal drugs." The records provided do not provide a documentation of response in regards to pain control and functional improvement to opioid analgesic for this patient. The continued review of overall situation with regard to nonopioid means of pain control is not documented in the records provided. As recommended by MTUS a documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects should be maintained for ongoing management of opioid analgesic, these are not specified in the records provided. MTUS guidelines also recommend urine drug screen to assess for the use or the presence of illegal drugs in patients using opioids for long term. A recent urine drug screen report is not specified in the records provided. The level of pain control with lower potency opioids and other non opioid medications (like anti-convulsants), without the use of Oxycodone HCL, was not specified in the records provided. Whether improvement in pain translated into objective functional improvement including ability to work is not specified in the records provided. With this, it is deemed that, this patient does not meet criteria for ongoing continued use of opioids analgesic. The medical necessity of Oxycodone HCL 10 mg #120 is not established for this patient, given the cited guidelines and the medical records provided. If the treating provider decides to discontinue opioids, it is recommended that the medication be tapered, per the discretion of the treating provider to prevent withdrawal symptoms. The request is not medically necessary.

Methadone HCL 10 mg #240: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 124.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, criteria for use: page 76-80 CRITERIA FOR USE OF OPIOIDS Therapeutic Trial of Opioids.

Decision rationale: Methadone HCL 10 mg #240. Methadone is an opioid analgesic. According to CA MTUS guidelines cited below, "A therapeutic trial of opioids should not be employed until the patient has failed a trial of non-opioid analgesics. Before initiating therapy, the patient

should set goals, and the continued use of opioids should be contingent on meeting these goals." The records provided do not specify that patient has set goals regarding the use of opioid analgesic. A treatment failure with non-opioid analgesics is not specified in the records provided. Other criteria for ongoing management of opioids are: "The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. Continuing review of the overall situation with regard to non-opioid means of pain control. Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Consider the use of a urine drug screen to assess for the use or the presence of illegal drugs." The records provided do not provide a documentation of response in regards to pain control and functional improvement to opioid analgesic for this patient. The continued review of overall situation with regard to non-opioid means of pain control is not documented in the records provided. As recommended by MTUS a documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects should be maintained for ongoing management of opioid analgesic, these are not specified in the records provided. MTUS guidelines also recommend urine drug screen to assess for the use or the presence of illegal drugs in patients using opioids for long term. A recent urine drug screen report is not specified in the records provided. The level of pain control with lower potency opioids and other non opioid medications (anti-convulsants), without the use of Methadone HCL, was not specified in the records provided. Whether improvement in pain translated into objective functional improvement including ability to work is not specified in the records provided. With this, it is deemed that, this patient does not meet criteria for ongoing continued use of opioids analgesic. The medical necessity of Methadone HCL 10 mg #240 is not established for this patient, given the cited guidelines and the medical records provided. If the treating provider decides to discontinue opioids, it is recommended that the medication be tapered, per the discretion of the treating provider, to prevent withdrawal symptoms. The request is not medically necessary.