

Case Number:	CM15-0106398		
Date Assigned:	06/10/2015	Date of Injury:	07/28/2009
Decision Date:	07/13/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/26/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/02/2015

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: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 49 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 07/28/2009. Current diagnoses include neuralgia neuritis and radiculitis, lumbar/lumbosacral disc degeneration, and postlaminectomy syndrome-lumbar. Previous treatments included medications, transforaminal epidural steroid injection, right trochanteric bursa injections, lumbar fusion, and psychiatric treatment. Previous diagnostic studies include MRI of the lumbar spine. Report dated 04/06/2015 noted that the injured worker presented with complaints that included low back pain. Pain level was 9 out of 10 on a visual analog scale with medications. Physical examination was positive for decreased range of motion in the lumbar area, and muscle tenderness. The treatment plan included a prescription for Oxycodone/acetaminophen and follow up in 8 weeks. Documentation supports long term use of Oxycodone/acetaminophen with no change in dosing. Disputed treatments include Oxycodone/acetaminophen (DOS 04/06/2015).

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Retrospective request for Oxycodone-acetaminophen 10/325mg #90 (DOS: 4/6/15): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 80-83, 86.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, page(s) 74-96.

Decision rationale: Per the MTUS Guidelines cited, opioid use in the setting of chronic, non-malignant, or neuropathic pain is controversial. Patients on opioids should be routinely monitored for signs of impairment and use of opioids in patients with chronic pain should be reserved for those with improved functional outcomes attributable to their use, in the context of an overall approach to pain management that also includes non-opioid analgesics, adjuvant therapies, psychological support, and active treatments (e.g., exercise). Submitted documents show no evidence that the treating physician is prescribing opioids in accordance to change in pain relief, functional goals with demonstrated improvement in daily activities, decreased in medical utilization or change in functional status. There is no evidence presented of random drug testing or utilization of pain contract to adequately monitor for narcotic safety, efficacy, and compliance. The MTUS provides requirements of the treating physician to assess and document for functional improvement with treatment intervention and maintenance of function that would otherwise deteriorate if not supported. From the submitted reports, there is no demonstrated evidence of specific functional benefit derived from the continuing use of opioids with persistent severe pain for this chronic injury without acute flare, new injury, or progressive deterioration. The Retrospective request for Oxycodone-acetaminophen 10/325mg #90 (DOS: 4/6/15) is not medically necessary and appropriate.