

Case Number:	CM15-0014404		
Date Assigned:	02/02/2015	Date of Injury:	05/27/2008
Decision Date:	04/13/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/08/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/26/2015

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: Florida

Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, 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 57 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 5/27/2008, while working in the capacity of warehouse labor. The diagnoses have included pain in joint, shoulder region, and low back pain. Treatment to date has included surgical and conservative treatments. Currently, the injured worker complains of unchanged low back pain and minimal left shoulder pain. He was in no distress. Prescription drug screening, collected 9/05/2014, was inconsistent with prescribed medications. Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (CURES) report showed Norco filled elsewhere from other sources, per the PR2 report dated 12/01/2014. There is no record of recent diagnostic testing. On 1/08/2015, Utilization Review modified a prescription request for Norco 10/325mg #60 to Norco 10/325mg #30 for weaning to discontinue, noting the lack of compliance with MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco Tab 10-325mg #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 76, 78-81, 89, 124.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, pain, opioids.

Decision rationale: ODG guidelines support opioids with: 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 nonadherent) drug-related behaviors. The medical records report chronic pain and documents ongoing opioid risk mitigation tool use in support of chronic therapy congruent with ODG guidelines, and demonstrated noncompliance with use of opioids. As such opioids would not be supported for use in treatment of the insured's pain. As such chronic opioids are not supported.