

Case Number:	CM15-0147187		
Date Assigned:	08/10/2015	Date of Injury:	04/20/2005
Decision Date:	09/25/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/13/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/29/2015

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, New York, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine

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 applicant is a represented 53-year-old who has filed a claim for hypertension (HTN) reportedly associated with an industrial injury of April 20, 2015. In a Utilization Review report dated July 13, 2015, the claims administrator failed to approve a request for chlorthalidone apparently prescribed and/or dispensed on or around June 15, 2015. The claims administrator seemingly denied chlorthalidone on the grounds that he believed the applicant should first employ hydrochlorothiazide in favor of chlorthalidone. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On February 10, 2015, the applicant's blood pressure was significantly elevated, at 180/110. In an RFA form dated February 24, 2015, chlorthalidone, clonidine, and Edarbi were prescribed. A nuclear medicine stress test was ordered. On June 15, 2015, the applicant again presented to follow up on unknown issues with hypertension. The applicant's blood pressure was elevated at 150/93. The applicant was asked to stop cigarette consumption. Chlorthalidone and Edarbi were prescribed.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Chlorthalidone 25 mg Qty 30: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines: Diabetes - Hypertension treatment; URL [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23552325].

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 3 Initial Approaches to Treatment Page(s): 47. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation National Library of Medicine, Chlorthalidone, Treats high blood pressure and fluid retention (edema). This medicine is a diuretic (water pill).

Decision rationale: The MTUS Guideline in ACOEM Chapter 3, page 47 stipulates that an attending provider incorporate some discussion of efficacy of medication for the particular condition for which it has been prescribed into his choice of recommendations so as to ensure proper usage and so as to manage expectations. Here, the attending provider did state that chlorthalidone was being employed for known issues with hypertension. The attending provider's documentation, while sparse, did seemingly suggest that the applicant's blood pressure had improved to some extent following introduction of chlorthalidone. The applicant's blood pressure was 150/93 on June 15, 2015. While still elevated, this did represent an improvement over the 180/110 reading reported on February 10, 2015. Continued usage of chlorthalidone was, thus, indicated, particularly in light of the fact that chlorthalidone is recommended by the National Library of Medicine (NLM) in the treatment of hypertension, i.e., the operating diagnosis present here. Therefore, the request is medically necessary.