

Case Number:	CM15-0160169		
Date Assigned:	08/26/2015	Date of Injury:	02/16/2005
Decision Date:	10/02/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/06/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/17/2015

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, District of Columbia, Maryland
Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, 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:

This 60 year old female sustained an industrial injury on 2-16-05. She subsequently reported head, neck and low back pain. Diagnoses include chronic pain and brachial neuritis. Treatments to date include psychotherapy, physical therapy and prescription pain medications. The injured worker has been on long-term Norco medication, it is evident that she is tolerant, time to escalate; she has continued to do her activities as best as she can. A request for Percocet 10/325mg #120 was made by the treating physician.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Percocet 10/325mg #120: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 3 Initial Approaches to Treatment Page(s): 47-49, 115, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Criteria for use of opioids Page(s): 78, 80-82.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 78, 92.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines p 78 regarding on-going management of opioids "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 any 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." Review of the available medical records reveals no documentation to support the medical necessity of percocet nor any documentation addressing the '4 A's' domains, which is a recommended practice for the on-going management of opioids. Specifically, the notes do not appropriately review and document pain relief, functional status improvement, appropriate medication use, or side effects. The MTUS considers this list of criteria for initiation and continuation of opioids in the context of efficacy required to substantiate medical necessity, and they do not appear to have been addressed by the treating physician in the documentation available for review. Efforts to rule out aberrant behavior (e.g. CURES report, UDS, opiate agreement) are necessary to assure safe usage and establish medical necessity. It was noted that UDS was performed 5/22/15. Results were not documented, though it was noted that it was positive for THC and that the injured worker does have a medical marijuana license. CURES report dated 6/11/15 showed no alternate prescribers or duplicate prescriptions. As MTUS recommends discontinuing opioids if there is no overall improvement in function, the request is not medically necessary.