

Case Number:	CM15-0161520		
Date Assigned:	08/27/2015	Date of Injury:	02/02/2007
Decision Date:	09/30/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/23/2015
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

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, 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 63 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 02-02-2007. On provider visit dated 07-15-2015 the injured worker has reported neck pain. On examination the neck was noted to have decreased range of motion and spasm over trapezius, decreased strength on right, decreased flex of neck and nearly full range of motor of shoulders were noted. The diagnoses have included brachial neuritis NOS. Treatment to date has included rehab exercises and medications noted as Soma, Gabapentin, and Tramadol. The injured worker was noted to return to modified work but he was also noted to have been medically retired since 2010 on same visit. The provider requested Soma, Gabapentin and Tramadol.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Soma 350 mg Qty 90: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Carisoprodol (Soma); Muscle relaxants (for pain) Page(s): 60; 63, 65.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 63-66 of 127.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for Soma, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines support the use of non-sedating muscle relaxants to be used with caution as a 2nd line option for the short-term treatment of acute exacerbations of pain. Within the documentation available for review, there is no identification of a specific analgesic benefit or objective functional improvement as a result of the medication. Additionally, it does not appear that this medication is being prescribed for the short-term treatment of an acute exacerbation, as recommended by guidelines. In the absence of such documentation, the currently requested Soma is not medically necessary.

Gabapentin 600 mg Qty 180: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Anti epilepsy drugs (AEDs) Page(s): 16-19.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines 8 C.C.R. 9792.20-9792.26 MTUS (Effective July 18, 2009) Page(s): 16-21 of 127.

Decision rationale: Regarding request for Gabapentin (Neurontin), Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that anti-epilepsy drugs are recommended for neuropathic pain. They go on to state that a good outcome is defined as 50% reduction in pain and a moderate response is defined as 30% reduction in pain. Guidelines go on to state that after initiation of treatment, there should be documentation of pain relief and improvement in function as well as documentation of side effects incurred with use. The continued use of AEDs depends on improved outcomes versus tolerability of adverse effects. Within the documentation available for review, there is no identification of any specific analgesic benefit (in terms of percent reduction in pain or reduction of NRS), and no documentation of specific objective functional improvement. Additionally, there is no discussion regarding side effects from this medication. Antiepileptic drugs should not be abruptly discontinued but unfortunately, there is no provision to modify the current request. As such, the currently requested gabapentin (Neurontin) is not medically necessary.

Tramadol 50 mg Qty 120: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Tramadol (Ultram); Opioids Page(s): 78-80, 93-94, 124.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 44, 47, 75-79, 120 of 127.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for tramadol, California Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that this is an opiate pain medication. Due to high abuse potential, close follow-up is recommended with documentation of analgesic effect, objective functional improvement, side effects, and discussion regarding any aberrant use. Guidelines go on to recommend discontinuing opioids if there is no documentation of improved function and pain. Within the documentation available for review, there is no indication that the medication is improving the

patient's function or pain (in terms of specific examples of functional improvement and percent reduction in pain or reduced NRS) and no discussion regarding aberrant use. As such, there is no clear indication for ongoing use of the medication. Opioids should not be abruptly discontinued, but unfortunately, there is no provision to modify the current request to allow tapering. In light of the above issues, the currently requested tramadol is not medically necessary.