

Case Number:	CM15-0162016		
Date Assigned:	08/27/2015	Date of Injury:	03/27/2007
Decision Date:	10/02/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/11/2015
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:

The injured worker is a 66 year old male who sustained an industrial-work injury on 3-27-07. He reported an initial complaint of right shoulder pain. The injured worker was diagnosed as having rotator cuff re-tear, right shoulder internal derangement, right shoulder contusion, right shoulder degenerative joint disease, right foraminal disc protrusion, depression and sleep disruption due to pain. Treatment to date includes medication, diagnostics, and surgery (right reverse total shoulder arthroplasty, biceps tenodesis and right shoulder SLAP (superior labrum anterior- posterior procedure). MRI results were reported on 4-4-12. Currently, the injured worker complained of chronic right shoulder pain. Per the primary physician's report (PR-2) on 8-4-15, exam notes right shoulder restricted range of motion in all directions, tenderness to palpation, right shoulder impingement signs including Hawkin's and Neer's were positive, right shoulder and cervical provocative maneuvers were positive, reflexes 1 and symmetrical bilaterally in the upper extremities, 5 out of 5 muscle strength except 4+ out of 5 in the right deltoid and bicep. The requested treatments include 3 Prescriptions of Norco 10/325mg.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

3 Prescriptions of Norco 10/325mg #120: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Hydrocodone/Acetaminophen.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 78, 91.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines p 78 regarding ongoing 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 Norco nor any documentation addressing the '4 A's' domains, which is a recommended practice for the ongoing 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. UDS report dated 1/16/15 was negative for Hydrocodone and positive for THC. As MTUS recommends to discontinue opioids if there is no overall improvement in function, medical necessity cannot be affirmed. Furthermore, the request for 3 prescriptions is not appropriate. The request is not medically necessary.