MAXIMUS Federal Services

| Case Number: | CM15-0181886 | | |
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| Date Assigned: | 09/23/2015 | Date of Injury: | 01/26/2007 |
| Decision Date: | 10/28/2015 | UR Denial Date: | 08/18/2015 |
| Priority: | Standard | Application Received: | 09/15/2015 |

## 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: North Carolina
Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

## 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 60 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 1-26-2007. The medical records submitted for this review did not include documentation regarding the initial injury. Diagnoses include left more than right sacroiliac arthralgia, lumbar disc injury, lumbar facet arthralgia and left sciatica. Treatments to date include medication therapy, physical therapy, sacroiliac joint injections, epidural steroid injection, and lumbar facet blocks. Currently, he complained of ongoing pain in the left hip and thigh, with benefit noted after an injection. It was noted a medial branch block provided pain relief for nearly one week. The provider documented "he is weaning off from the Tylenol #3" and had complained of constipation with medication use, however, details of the weaning were not included. On 7-28-15, the physical examination documented lumbar tenderness, decreased range of motion, a bilaterally positive straight leg raise test, and a left side positive Kemp's sign. The plan of care included a new order for Voltaren 1% Gel to use topically to the back, Colace for constipation, and continuation of previously prescribed medication including Amitriptyline, Neurontin, and Lidocaine patch. The appeal requested authorization for Tylenol #3 (APAP with codeine) 300-30mg, one tablet twice daily for pain #60 with two refills. The Utilization Review dated 8-18-15, denied the request indicating that the available medical records did not support that the California Medical treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) Guidelines were met.

## IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**APAP with Codeine 30/300mg #60 with 2 refills prescribed 7/28/15:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Opioids for chronic pain.

**Decision rationale:** The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on opioids states for ongoing management: On-Going Management, Actions Should Include: (a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy. (b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. (c) Office: 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 non-adherent) drug-related behaviors. These domains have been summarized as the "4 A's" (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and 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. (Passik, 2000) (d) Home: To aid in pain and functioning assessment, the patient should be requested to keep a pain dairy that includes entries such as pain triggers, and incidence of end-of-dose pain. It should be emphasized that using this diary will help in tailoring the opioid dose. This should not be a requirement for pain management. (e) Use of drug screening or inpatient treatment with issues of abuse, addiction, or poor pain control. (f) Documentation of misuse of medications (doctor-shopping, uncontrolled drug escalation, drug diversion). (g) Continuing review of overall situation with regard to non-opioid means of pain control. (h) Consideration of a consultation with a multidisciplinary pain clinic if doses of opioids are required beyond what is usually required for the condition or pain does not improve on opioids in 3 months. Consider a psych consult if there is evidence of depression, anxiety or irritability. Consider an addiction medicine consult if there is evidence of substance misuse. When to Continue Opioids: (a) If the patient has returned to work; (b) If the patient has improved functioning and pain. (Washington, 2002) (Colorado, 2002) (Ontario, 2000) (VA/DoD, 2003) (Maddox-AAPM/APS, 1997) (Wisconsin, 2004) (Warfield, 2004) The long-term use of this medication class is not recommended per the California MTUS unless there documented evidence of benefit with measurable outcome measures and improvement in function. There is no documentation of significant subjective improvement in pain such as VAS scores. There is no objective measure of improvement in function or activities due to medication. Work status is not mentioned. For these reasons all the criteria set forth above of ongoing and continued used of opioids have not been met. Therefore the request is not medically necessary.