MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM15-0030572		
Date Assigned:	02/24/2015	Date of Injury:	06/22/2011
Decision Date:	04/23/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/15/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/18/2015

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 31-year-old [redacted] employee who has filed a claim for chronic low back pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of June 22, 2011.In a Utilization Review Report dated January 15, 2015, the claims administrator denied a request for comprehensive metabolic panel, invoking non-MTUS American Heart Association (AHA) Guidelines. The claims administrator also alluded to a January 12, 2015 RFA form in its determination. The claims administrator did acknowledge that applicant was using a variety of medications, including Norco and tizanidine and had, furthermore, recently discontinued Relafen. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On January 12, 2015, urine drug testing and comprehensive metabolic panel were endorsed. The applicant was severely obese, it was stated. Ongoing complaints of neck pain were noted. It was suggested (but not clearly stated) the applicant was working. The applicant was using Xanax for anxiolytic effect, Norco for severe pain, and tizanidine every other day. The applicant had developed issues with sleep apnea. The applicant had recently discontinued Relafen owing to alleged palpitations, it was stated. The applicant was apparently returned to work at a rate of 10 hours per day.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Comprehensive metabolic panel labs: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation www.circ.ahajournals.org/cgi/content/full/116/17/e418.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDs, specific drug list & adverse effects Page(s): 70.

Decision rationale: Yes, the request for comprehensive metabolic panel was medically necessary, medically appropriate, and indicated here. As noted on page 70 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, routine suggested laboratory monitoring in applicants using NSAIDs includes periodic assessment of an applicant's hematologic function, renal function, and hepatic function. The comprehensive metabolic panel labs do include testing for renal and hepatic function. Here, the applicant was described as having recently used NSAIDs, including Relafen, and was, furthermore, currently using several other medications processing the liver and kidneys on or around the date of the request, January 12, 2015, including Norco, tizanidine, Xanax, etc. Assessing the applicant's renal and hepatic function via the comprehensive metabolic panel at issue was, thus, indicated, to ensure that the applicant's current levels of renal and hepatic function were compatible with currently prescribed medications. Therefore, the request was medically necessary.