

Case Number:	CM15-0036653		
Date Assigned:	03/05/2015	Date of Injury:	07/02/2007
Decision Date:	04/15/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/19/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/26/2015

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 35-year-old [REDACTED] beneficiary who has filed a claim for chronic low back pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of July 2, 2007. Thus far, the applicant has been treated with the following: Analgesic medications; transfer of care to and from various providers in various specialties; unspecified amounts of physical therapy; earlier failed lumbar fusion surgery; and extensive periods of time off of work. In a Utilization Review Report dated February 19, 2015, the claims administrator partially approved/conditionally approved a request for Lyrica (pregabalin). The claims administrator referenced a February 5, 2015 progress note in its determination. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. In a November 20, 2014 progress note, the applicant reported ongoing complaints of low back pain radiating into right leg. The applicant was off of work. A rather proscriptive 5-pound lifting limitation was renewed. The applicant was overweight, with BMI of 30. The applicant developed issues with depression. The applicant was limited in her ability to do household chores and care for her children. On February 6, 2015, the attending provider suggested that the applicant employ Lyrica and naproxen on a trial basis. Both requests were framed as first-time request. The applicant had reportedly tried gabapentin in the past and failed the same. The same, unchanged, 5-pound lifting limitation was renewed. The applicant was not working with said limitation in place.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Lyrica (pregabalin) 50 mg,: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 67 - 68.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Pregabalin (Lyrica); Pain Mechanisms Page(s): 99; 3.

Decision rationale: Yes, the request for pregabalin (Lyrica), an anticonvulsant adjuvant medication, was medically necessary, medically appropriate, and indicated here. As noted on page 99 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, pregabalin or Lyrica is considered a first-line treatment for diabetic neuropathic pain and/or neuropathic pain associated with postherpetic neuralgia and, by analogy, is indicated in the treatment of neuropathic pain, which, per page 3 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, is characterized by numbing, tingling, lancinating, and/or burning like sensation. Here, the applicant did report such sensations associated with her chronic low back pain status post earlier failed lumbar spine surgery. Introduction of Lyrica, thus, was indicated on or around the date in question. Therefore, the first-time request for Lyrica was medically necessary.