

Case Number:	CM15-0036663		
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. In a Utilization Review Report dated February 19, 2015, the claims administrator failed to approve requests for naproxen and Lyrica, both of which were partially approved. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. In a January 26, 2015 progress note, the applicant reported 6/10 pain complaints. The applicant was using Relafen, Norco, and Prozac, it was acknowledged. The applicant's primary issue was in fact low back pain. Ancillary issues included depression. The applicant was overweight, with BMI of 30. The applicant's work status was not clearly detailed. The attending provider stated that the applicant's medications were working but declined to elaborate further. In an August 27, 2014 progress note, the applicant had undergone a failed lumbar fusion procedure. On November 20, 2014, the applicant was given a refill of Norco. The applicant was in severe pain and could not function, it was acknowledged. Depressive symptoms were reported. 8-9/10 pain was noted. The applicant was limited in terms of her ability to do even light household chores. The applicant's mother was taking care of her children. The applicant was in the process of applying for pursuing Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), it was acknowledged. A rather proscriptive 5-pound lifting limitation was renewed, seemingly resulting in the applicant's removal from the workplace. A February 6, 2015 progress note suggested that the applicant should employ Lyrica on a trial basis. The attending provider seemingly suggested that the applicant employ naproxen in favor of previously prescribed nabumetone (Relafen). The request for naproxen was framed as a first-time request.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Naprosyn 500 mg tablet, Qty 120: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 16-22, 67-68.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Anti-inflammatory medications Page(s): 22.

Decision rationale: Yes, the request for naproxen, an anti-inflammatory medication, was medically necessary, medically appropriate, or indicated here. As noted on page 22 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, anti-inflammatory medications such as naproxen do represent the traditional first line of treatment for various chronic pain conditions, including the chronic low back pain reportedly present here. The request in question was framed as a first-time request for the same in a progress note dated February 2, 2015. The applicant did have ongoing, longstanding, severe low back pain complaints which had proven recalcitrant to other medications, including Norco and Relafen. Introduction of naproxen, thus, was indicated on or around the date in question. Therefore, the first-time request for naproxen was medically necessary.