

Case Number:	CM15-0043305		
Date Assigned:	03/13/2015	Date of Injury:	12/14/2009
Decision Date:	04/23/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/16/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/06/2015

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

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 47 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 12/14/09. Medications include Norco and gabapentin. Her pain intensity is 6/10 and can go to 9/10 without medications. Diagnoses include cervical stenosis; right shoulder pain and neck pain. Treatments to date include chiropractic care with benefit. Diagnostics include positive MRI for spinal stenosis (no date was provided). In the progress note dated 12/8/14 the treating provider recommended the injured worker to continue with Norco.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 10/325 mg, 120 count: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Pain (Chronic) Chapter.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines CRITERIA FOR USE OF OPIOIDS Hydrocodone Page(s): 76-78, 88-89, 90.

Decision rationale: The patient presents with right shoulder and neck pain. The request is for NORCO 10/325MG, 120 COUNT. There is no RFA provided and the date of injury is 12/14/09. Per 01/08/15 report, the diagnoses included cervical stenosis, right shoulder pain and neck pain. Physical examination revealed tenderness to palpation and limited range of motion of the cervical spine. There is tenderness to palpation and limited range of motion to the right shoulder. Sensation decreased at C5-C6 and deep tendon reflexes are +2. Current medications include Norco and Gabapentin. The patient works on modified duty, per 12/08/14 report. MTUS Guidelines pages 88 and 89 state, "Pain should be assessed at each visit and functioning should be measured at 6-month intervals using a numerical scale or a validated instrument." MTUS page 78 also requires documentation of the 4As (analgesia, ADLs, adverse side effects, and adverse behavior) as well as "pain assessment" or outcome measures that include current pain, average pain, least pain, intensity of pain after taking the opioid, time it takes for medication to work, and duration of pain relief. MTUS p90 states, "Hydrocodone has a recommended maximum dose of 60mg/24hrs." Treater has not provided a reason for the request. Norco was prescribed to the patient per provided reports 11/18/14 through 01/08/15. The use of opiates require detailed documentation regarding pain and function as required by MTUS. There are no pain scales or validated instruments addressing analgesia. There are no specific discussions regarding aberrant behavior, adverse reactions, ADL's, etc. No opioid pain agreement or CURES reports. MTUS requires appropriate discussion of the 4A's. Given the lack of documentation as required by guidelines, the request IS NOT medically necessary.