

Case Number:	CM15-0044156		
Date Assigned:	03/16/2015	Date of Injury:	03/03/2010
Decision Date:	04/17/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/24/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/09/2015

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: Iowa, Illinois, Hawaii

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine, Public Health & General Preventive 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 injured worker is a 49 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on March 3, 2010. He reported low back injury. The injured worker was diagnosed as having chronic pain syndrome, lumbar post laminectomy syndrome, opioid type dependence, and chronic low back pain syndrome. Treatment to date has included psychology visits, medications, home exercise program, and back surgery. On February 10, 2015, he is seen for continued back pain. He reports doing fairly well. The records indicate he is maintained on a maintenance dose of Suboxone. The records indicate he was prescribed Ibuprofen 600 mg tablets, and Suboxone 8mg-2mg sublingual film on August 15, 2014.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Suboxone 8mg-2mg sublingual #75 with 2 refills: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain Chapter, Opioids.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Buprenorphine Page(s): 26-27. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Chronic Pain, Butrans.

Decision rationale: MTUS states that Suboxone, which is a brand name of the drug known as buprenorphine, is "recommended for treatment of opiate addiction. Also recommended as an option for chronic pain, especially after detoxification in patients who have a history of opiate addiction." ODG states "Buprenorphine transdermal system (Butrans; no generics): FDA-approved for moderate to severe chronic pain. Available as transdermal patches at 5mcg/hr, 10mcg/hr and 20mcg/hr. See also Buprenorphine for treatment of opioid dependence." The ODG states that Suboxone is "recommended as an option for treatment of chronic pain (consensus based) in selected patients (not first-line for all patients). Suggested populations: (1) Patients with a hyperalgesic component to pain; (2) Patients with centrally mediated pain; (3) Patients with neuropathic pain; (4) Patients at high-risk of non-adherence with standard opioid maintenance; (5) For analgesia in patients who have previously been detoxified from other high-dose opioids. Use for pain with formulations other than Butrans is off-label. Due to complexity of induction and treatment the drug should be reserved for use by clinicians with experience." The employee is using this medication for chronic pain. However, there is no medical documentation of any of the five conditions listed above which are the specific indications for using Suboxone instead of one of the first line agents. Therefore, the request for Suboxone 8mg-2mg sublingual #75 with 2 refills is not medically necessary.