MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM15-0044861		
Date Assigned:	03/17/2015	Date of Injury:	02/22/2013
Decision Date:	04/22/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/03/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/10/2015

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, California
Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This is a 42 year old male patient who sustained an industrial injury on 02/22/2013. He sustained the injury while moving appliances. The current diagnosis includes right inguinal hernia. Per the doctor's note dated 12/15/2014, he had complaints of right inguinal pain. Physical examination revealed tenderness to palpation over the right inguinal area. The current medications list includes Norco. He has undergone bilateral hernia repair on 7/16/2013. He has had urine toxicology reports on 12/15/2014, 1/13/2015 and 1/26/2015, which was negative for opiates.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 10/325mg #20: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 86.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, criteria for use Page(s): 76-80.

Decision rationale: Request: Norco 10/325mg #20Norco contains hydrocodone and acetaminophen. Hydrocodone is an opioid analgesic. According to CA MTUS guidelines, "A

therapeutic trial of opioids should not be employed until the patient has failed a trial of non-opioid analgesics. Before initiating therapy, the patient should set goals, and the continued use of opioids should be contingent on meeting these goals." The records provided do not specify that that patient has set goals regarding the use of opioid analgesic. A treatment failure with non-opioid analgesics is not specified in the records provided. Other criteria for ongoing management of opioids are: "The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function, continuing review of the overall situation with regard to non opioid means of pain control. Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Consider the use of a urine drug screen to assess for the use or the presence of illegal drugs." The records provided do not provide a documentation of response in regards to pain control and objective functional improvement to opioid analgesic for this patient. The continued review of the overall situation with regard to non-opioid means of pain control is not documented in the records provided. As recommended by the cited guidelines a documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects should be maintained for ongoing management of opioid analgesic, these are not specified in the records provided. Response to lower potency opioids like tramadol is not specified in the records provided. He has had urine toxicology reports on 12/15/2014, 1/13/2015 and 1/26/2015, which was negative for opiates. With this, it is deemed that this patient does not meet criteria for ongoing use of opioids analgesic. The medical necessity of Norco 10/325mg is not established for this patient at this time.