

Case Number:	CM15-0047253		
Date Assigned:	03/19/2015	Date of Injury:	01/26/2007
Decision Date:	04/24/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/09/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/12/2015

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: Massachusetts

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Pain Management

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 77-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 1/26/07. He reported low back pain. The injured worker was diagnosed as having lumbar disc injury, lumbar facet arthralgia, lumbar radiculopathy, left median meniscal injury and xerostomia causing poor dentition. Treatment to date has included oral medications including Vicodin, topical medications and activity restrictions. Currently, the injured worker complains of constant low back pain with intermittent radiation to right lower extremity. The injured worker stated the Vicodin helps to decrease pain. On physical exam moderate pain is noted over the bilateral L3-4, L4-5 and L5-S1 segments of lumbar spine and moderate pain over medial joint line of left knee. The current treatment plan includes continuing Vicodin, addition of Hydrocodone (hyslingla), Ambien and continuation of topical treatment.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Hysingla ER 30mg #15: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines - Treatment for Workers' Compensation (ODG-TWC) Pain Procedure Summary Online last updated 1/19/2015.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines (1) Pain Outcomes and Endpoints, p8, (2) Opioids, criteria for use, p76-80 (3) Opioids, dosing, p86 Page(s): 8, 76-80, 86.

Decision rationale: The claimant sustained a work-related injury in 2007 and continues to be treated for chronic low back pain with intermitted lower extremity radicular symptoms. Medications include Vicodin 10/300 mg is being prescribed. Hysingla is being requested at 30 mg per day. The total MED (morphine equivalent dose) being requested is 80 mg per day. Guidelines indicate that when an injured worker has reached a permanent and stationary status or maximal medical improvement, that does not mean that they are no longer entitled to future medical care. When prescribing controlled substances for pain, satisfactory response to treatment may be indicated by the patient's decreased pain, increased level of function, or improved quality of life. Hysingla (extended release hydrocodone) is a sustained release formulation and would be used to treat baseline pain which is present in this case. It is being requested as part of the claimant's ongoing management. There are no identified issues of abuse, addiction, and poor pain control appears related to being unable to obtain medications. There are no inconsistencies in the history, presentation, the claimant's behaviors, or by physical examination. The total MED (morphine equivalent dose) is less than 120 mg per day consistent with guideline recommendations. Therefore, the prescribing of Hysingla was medically necessary.