MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM15-0051270		
Date Assigned:	03/24/2015	Date of Injury:	11/08/2011
Decision Date:	05/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/24/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/18/2015

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: North Carolina
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:

The injured worker is a 54-year-old female, with a reported date of injury of 11/08/2011.The diagnoses include right upper extremity complex regional pain syndrome, cervical disc disease, cervical radiculopathy, status post right shoulder arthropathy, and status post bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome release. Treatments to date have included a right stellate ganglion block, an MRI of the cervical spine, physical therapy, chiropractic therapy, home exercise program, and oral medications. The follow-up evaluation report dated 02/03/2015 indicates that the injured worker complained of neck and right shoulder pain. She rated the pain 8 out of 10. The physical examination showed decreased cervical lordosis, moderate tenderness to palpation with spasm over the paravertebral cervical muscles to the right trapezius muscle, facet tenderness to palpation over C3-C7, decreased cervical range of motion, decreased right shoulder range of motion, positive right impingement sign, decreased sensation in the left C5 and bilateral C6 dermatomes and decreased right upper extremity muscle strength. The treating physician requested a urine toxicology screening to ensure compliance of the medication regimen and to verify that the injured worker was not receiving medication from multiple prescribing physicians or illicit drugs.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Urine toxicology screening: Overturned

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 76-84.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on Opioids states: On-Going Management. Actions Should Include: (a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed, and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy. (b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. (c) Office: Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Pain assessment should include current pain; the least reported pain over the period since last assessment; average pain; intensity of pain after taking the opioid; how long it takes for pain relief; and how long pain relief lasts. Satisfactory response to treatment may be indicated by the patient's decreased pain, increased level of function, or improved quality of life. Information from family members or other caregivers should be considered in determining the patient's response to treatment. The 4A's for Ongoing Monitoring: Four domains have been proposed as most relevant for ongoing monitoring of chronic pain patients on opioids: pain relief, side effects, physical and psychosocial functioning, and the occurrence of any potentially aberrant (or non-adherent) drug-related behaviors. These domains have been summarized as the "4 A's" (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug taking behaviors). The monitoring of these outcomes over time should affect therapeutic decisions and provide a framework for documentation of the clinical use of these controlled drugs. (Passik, 2000)(d) Home: To aid in pain and functioning assessment, the patient should be requested to keep a pain dairy that includes entries such as pain triggers, and incidence of end-of-dose pain. It should be emphasized that using this diary will help in tailoring the opioid dose. This should not be a requirement for pain management. (e) Use of drug screening or inpatient treatment with issues of abuse, addiction, or poor pain control. (f) Documentation of misuse of medications (doctor-shopping, uncontrolled drug escalation, drug diversion). (g) Continuing review of overall situation with regard to non-opioid means of pain control. (h) Consideration of a consultation with a multidisciplinary pain clinic if doses of opioids are required beyond what is usually required for the condition or pain does not improve on opioids in 3 months. Consider a psych consult if there is evidence of depression, anxiety or irritability. Consider an addiction medicine consult if there is evidence of substance misuse. The California MTUS does recommend urine drug screens as part of the criteria for ongoing use of opioids. The patient was on opioids at the time of request and therefore the request is medically necessary.