

Case Number:	CM15-0059820		
Date Assigned:	04/06/2015	Date of Injury:	06/01/2004
Decision Date:	05/05/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/13/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/30/2015

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, Illinois

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational 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:

This 60 year old male sustained an industrial injury on 6/1/04. He subsequently reported back pain. Diagnoses include lumbar radiculopathy and spinal stenosis. Diagnostic testing has included MRIs. Treatments to date have included injections, surgery and prescription pain medications. The injured worker continues to experience low back pain with radiation to the lower extremities. A request for Norco medication was made by the treating physician.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 1/325mg #27: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Chronic Pain Discussion; Opioids Page(s): 8; 78-81.

Decision rationale: The injured worker sustained a work related injury on 6/1/04. The medical records provided indicate the diagnosis of lumbar radiculopathy and spinal stenosis. Treatments have included injections, surgery and prescription pain medications. The medical records

provided for review do not indicate a medical necessity for Norco 1/325mg #27. The MTUS recommends the use of the lowest dose of opioids for the short term treatment of moderate to severe pain. The MTUS does not recommend the use of opioids for longer than 70 days in the treatment of chronic pain due to worsening adverse effects and lack of research in support of benefit. Also, the MTUS recommends that individuals on opioid maintenance treatment be monitored for analgesia (pain control), activities of daily living, adverse effects and aberrant behavior; the MTUS recommends discontinuation of opioid treatment if there is no documented evidence of overall improvement or if there is evidence of illegal activity or drug abuse or adverse effect with the opioid medication. The records indicate he has been on opioids for several years without overall improvement in pain and function; he has a history of nephrectomy secondary to cancer, therefore forbidden from taking NSAIDs. He was previously treated with Neurontin, a medication for neuropathic pain and spinal stenosis, but the documents reviewed did not include a documentation of the outcome of treatment. The documents reviewed did not provide information on monitoring of pain control, adverse effects, activities of daily living and aberrant behavior. Therefore, although the injured individual is unable to take NSAIDs and OTC medications, the documentation do not provide convincing reasons on why Opioids should be continued.