

Case Number:	CM15-0087387		
Date Assigned:	05/11/2015	Date of Injury:	04/21/2014
Decision Date:	06/11/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/02/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/06/2015

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: New Jersey, Alabama, California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Neuromuscular 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 41-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 4/21/2014. He reported shoulder pain while unloading a roll of carpeting. The injured worker was diagnosed as having right rotator cuff tear and impingement and right shoulder arthroscopic surgery on 2/27/2015. Treatment to date has included diagnostics, right shoulder surgery, and medications. The urine drug screen, dated 3/09/2015, was negative for the use of Norco. Currently (4/13/2015), the injured worker reported decreasing right shoulder pain. Pain was not rated. An immobilizer was in place. The right shoulder incision was well healed. Medications included Naproxen, Norco, Prilosec, and Flexeril. The use of Norco was noted since the date of right shoulder surgery. The treatment plan included an arm sling, physical therapy in 1-2 weeks, and medication refills. He was to remain off work for at least 6 weeks.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 10/325mg #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Hydrocodone/Acetaminophen (Norco), Opioids, criteria for use.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Criteria for use of opioids Page(s): 76-79.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, Norco (Hydrocodone/Acetaminophen) is a synthetic opioid indicated for the pain management but not recommended as a first line oral analgesic. In addition and according to MTUS guidelines, ongoing use of opioids should follow specific rules: (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. 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 4A'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. According to the patient file, there is no objective documentation of pain and functional improvement to justify continuous use of Norco. The patient underwent shoulder surgery on February 27, 2015 and Norco was prescribed for his post-op pain. However, the UDS collected on March 13, 2015 was negative for any medication prescribed, including opioids. Therefore, the prescription of Norco 10/325mg #60 is not medically necessary.