

Case Number:	CM15-0089374		
Date Assigned:	05/13/2015	Date of Injury:	06/23/2011
Decision Date:	06/19/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/08/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/08/2015

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: Florida
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, 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 41 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 06/23/2011. He has reported injury to the head, back, knees, right hand/wrist, right elbow, left shoulder, and legs. The diagnoses have included right index trigger finger, status post release; right long finger trigger finger; left thumb and index trigger fingers; left hand stenosing flexor tenosynovitis, thumb, index, and middle digits; status post left A1 pulley release on 11/03/2014; and status post bilateral carpal tunnel release. Treatment to date has included medications, diagnostics, and surgical intervention. Medications have included Tramadol and Hydrocodone. A progress note from the treating physician, dated 03/26/2015, documented a follow-up visit with the injured worker. Currently, the injured worker complains of left hand pain, rated 7/10 on the visual analog scale; right hand/wrist pain, rated 5/10 on the visual analog scale; and expresses concern in regards to no postoperative physical therapy. Objective findings included tenderness to the left palmar hand; and incision is well-healed. The treatment plan has included the request for narcotic Hydrocodone 10 mg #60; and for Tramadol 50 mg #90.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Narcotic Hydrocodone 10mg #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 78.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation official disability guidelines: pain, opioids.

Decision rationale: ODG guidelines support opioids with: 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 4 A'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. The medical records report chronic pain but does not document ongoing opioid risk mitigation tool use in support of chronic therapy congruent with ODG guidelines. As such, chronic opioids are not supported and the request is not medically necessary.

Tramadol 50mg #90: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 78.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation official disability guidelines: pain, opioids.

Decision rationale: ODG guidelines support opioids with: 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 4 A'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. The medical records report chronic pain but does not document ongoing opioid risk mitigation tool use in support of chronic therapy congruent with ODG guidelines. As such chronic opioids are not supported and is not medically necessary.