

Case Number:	CM14-0165277		
Date Assigned:	10/10/2014	Date of Injury:	02/25/2012
Decision Date:	12/24/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/08/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/07/2014

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. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Family Medicine and is licensed to practice in California. 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

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 was a 66-year old male whom experienced an industrial injury on 2/25/12. He was re-evaluated by his primary treating physician on 09/29/14. He has been attending physical therapy which has helped his pain and range of motion. Upon physical examination he exhibited tenderness to palpation of the paraspinal muscles and limited range of motion to bilateral knees. Diagnoses were 847.2 Lumbar sprain/strain, 717.9 internal derangement of knee not specified, and 718.97 internal derangement of the ankle and foot. Treatment plan is to continue taking the same medication(s), Hydrocodone [Norco] 10-325 one tablet twice daily and to complete physical therapy.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Hydrocodone (Norco)/Apap 10-325mg tab: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 82-88.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Part 2 - Pain Interventions and Treatments Page(s): 75, 91. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Appendix A, ODG Workers' Compensation Drug Formulary, Hydrocodone (Norco)/Apap 10-325mg tab, per ODG website

Decision rationale: Guidelines note that opiates are indicated for moderate to moderately severe pain. Opioid medications are not intended for long term use. As stated on page 78 of CA MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, there are 4 A's for ongoing monitoring of opioid use: pain relief, side effects, physical and psychosocial functioning and the occurrence of any potentially aberrant drug-related 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. In this case, patient has been on opiates long term. However, the medical records do not clearly reflect continued analgesia, continued functional benefit, or a lack of adverse side effects. MTUS Guidelines require clear and concise documentation for ongoing management. Therefore, the request is not reasonable to continue. Additionally, within the medical information available for review, there was no documentation that the prescriptions were from a single practitioner and were taken as directed and that the lowest possible dose was being used. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.