

Case Number:	CM14-0166312		
Date Assigned:	10/14/2014	Date of Injury:	08/05/2009
Decision Date:	11/14/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/26/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/09/2014

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 Occupational 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:

This patient is a 51 y/o male who had developed chronic thoracic spinal pain subsequent to an injury dated 8/6/09. He has a cystic structure in his thoracic spine that is thought to be congenital, is stable and is thought to be unrelated to his pain even though there is slight cord displacement. There are mild degenerative disc changes at 2 thoracic levels. The pain is described to be that the T5&6 levels and without radiation. His VAS scores are reported to be generally between 8-9/10. There is no detailing of pain relief or any functional benefits from the opioid medications.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Hydromorphone tab 8mg: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 79, 85, 95.

Decision rationale: MTUS Guidelines supports the judicious use of opioid mediations if there is specific reporting of benefits that is evidenced by pain relief and functional benefits. There is no documentation of the how the opioids are utilized, the level of pain relief, how long the relief

lasts and how they affect function. There is no documentation giving consideration to possible opioid hyperalgesia. Under these circumstances, the Hydromorphone 8 mg. is not supported by Guidelines and is not medically necessary.

Tizanidine tab 4mg: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle Relaxants Page(s): 63, 66.

Decision rationale: MTUS Guidelines generally discourage the long term use of muscle relaxants for chronic spinal pain; however Tizanidine is an exemption to this recommendation. To justify the long term use of Tizanidine, Guideline standards call for reasonable evidence of benefits including pain relief and functional support. Neither pain relief nor functional benefits are reported. Under these circumstances, the Tizanidine is not medically necessary.

Hydrocodone tab 10-32mg: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 79, 85, 95.

Decision rationale: MTUS Guidelines supports the judicious use of opioid mediations if there is specific reporting of benefits that is evidenced by pain relief and functional benefits. There is no documentation of the how the opioids are utilized, the level of pain relief, how long the relief lasts and how they affect function. There is no documentation giving consideration to possible opioid hyperalgesia. Under these circumstances, the Hydrocodone 10 mg. is not supported by Guidelines and is not medically necessary.