

Case Number:	CM14-0180085		
Date Assigned:	11/04/2014	Date of Injury:	09/03/2010
Decision Date:	12/09/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/02/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/29/2014

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 Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and is licensed to practice in Texas. 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:

Medical records reflect the claimant is a 35 year old female who sustained a work injury on 9-3-10. Office visit on 10-10-14 notes the claimant has upper back, low back, and right wrist and right ankle pain. The claimant reports medications are helping. She reports side effect with constipation. The claimant reports no evidence of developing medication dependency. She reports that with her current medication regimen, her pain symptoms are adequately managed. She reports headaches. It is noted the claimant was started on Gabapentin, referral for surgical consult, reschedule her cervical epidural steroid injection. She is continued with her medications.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 10/325mg #90: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74-96. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain chapter - opioids

Decision rationale: Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines as well as ODG notes that ongoing use of opioids require 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 nonadherent) drug-related behaviors. These domains have been summarized as the "4 A's" (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug-taking behaviors). There is an absence in documentation noting that the claimant has functional improvement with this medication. The claimant reports improvement, but there is no quantification of improvement or any documentation that this medication improves psychosocial functioning. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.

Lorazepam 0.5mg #60: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Benzodiazepines Page(s): 24. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) pain chapter - benzodiazepines

Decision rationale: Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines as well as ODG reflect that benzodiazepines are not recommended for long-term use because long-term efficacy is unproven and there is a risk of dependence. Most guidelines limit use to 4 weeks. There is an absence in documentation noting that this claimant has a diagnosis or a condition that would support exceeding current treatment guidelines or that there are extenuating circumstances to support the long term use of this medication. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.

Ambien 5mg #30: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Pain (Chronic), Zolpidem (Ambien)

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain chapter - Zolpidem

Decision rationale: ODG does not support the long term use of this medication. There is no discussion regarding this claimant's sleep hygiene. There are no extenuating circumstances to support exceeding current treatment guidelines for the long term use of this medication.