

Case Number:	CM14-0211249		
Date Assigned:	12/24/2014	Date of Injury:	12/20/2011
Decision Date:	02/23/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/19/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/17/2014

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. 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: Georgia

Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, 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 patient presented with a work-related injury on December 20, 2011. The patient complained of bilateral shoulder and lumbar pain. The patient is status post bilateral shoulder surgery. On November 4, 2014 the patient complained of bilateral shoulder and low back pain. The patient received epidural steroid injections in 2012th 2013. The physical exam was significant for right shoulder range of motion flexion 100, abduction 100, left shoulder flexion 90, abduction 90, lumbar range of motion flexion at 40, extension 10, lumbar tenderness and antalgic gait with the patient living on the right side. According to the medical records the patient has attended physical therapy and acupuncture session. The patient was diagnosed with lumbar strain and disc disease, as well as bilateral shoulder worsening pain. According to the medical records the patient is totally disabled.

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 Criteria for the Use of Opioids - On-Going Management.

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

Decision rationale: Norco 10/325mg #60 is not medically necessary. Per MTUS page 79 of MTUS guidelines states that weaning of opioids are recommended if (a) there are no overall improvement in function, unless there are extenuating circumstances (b) continuing pain with evidence of intolerable adverse effects (c) decrease in functioning (d) resolution of pain (e) if serious non-adherence is occurring (f) the patient requests discontinuing. The claimant's medical records did not document that there was an overall improvement in function or a return to work with previous opioid therapy. The claimant has long-term use with this medication and there was a lack of improved function with this opioid; therefore the requested medication is not medically necessary.

Flexor Patch #30: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics Page(s): 111-112.

Decision rationale: Flector Patch # 30 is not medically necessary. According to California MTUS, 2009, chronic pain, page 111 California MTUS guidelines does not cover "topical analgesics that are largely experimental in use with a few randomized controlled trials to determine efficacy or safety. Any compounded product that contains at least one drug or drug class that is not recommended is not recommended". Additionally, Per CA MTUS page 111 states that topical analgesics such as Diclofenac, is indicated for Osteoarthritis and tendinitis, in particular, that of the knee and elbow or other joints that are amenable to topical treatment. It is also recommended for short-term use (4-12 weeks). There is little evidence to utilize topical NSAIDs for treatment of pain associated with the spine, hip or shoulder. The limitation of use was not specified in the medical records. Additionally, there was not documentation of a contraindication to oral NSAID use; therefore topical patch is not medically necessary.