

Case Number:	CM14-0212394		
Date Assigned:	01/02/2015	Date of Injury:	04/02/2001
Decision Date:	02/28/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/16/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/18/2014

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: Texas, Ohio, California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine

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 applicant is a represented [REDACTED] employee who has filed a claim for coronary artery disease (CAD) reportedly associated with an industrial injury of April 2, 2001. In a Utilization Review Report dated November 14, 2014, the claims administrator partially approved a request for nicotine smoking patches as a one-month supply of the same. A progress note dated October 31, 2014 was referenced in the determination. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On September 11, 2014, the applicant presented to follow up on issues with coronary artery disease, hypertension, and dyslipidemia. The applicant was 68 years old, it was acknowledged. The applicant was on aspirin, Zestril, and Tenormin. The applicant denied any issues with chest pain or dyspnea. The applicant was apparently still smoking. The applicant's BMI was 21. The applicant was asked to continue current medication therapy for coronary artery disease. The applicant was reportedly stable. The applicant was asked to cease smoking. Multiple medications were renewed. The remainder of the file was surveyed. The October 31, 2014 progress note which the claims administrator based its decision upon did not appear to have been incorporated into the Independent Medical Review packet. An earlier note of January 29, 2014 was notable for comments that the applicant was smoking as of that point in time.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Nicotine Patches: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation <http://www.drugs.com/edi/nicotine-patch.html>

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Medscape, Nicotine Patches Medication Guide

Decision rationale: The MTUS does not address the topic. However, Medscape notes that nicotine patches are indicated in the treatment of smoking cessation. Medscape recommends adopting an eight-week regimen to wean an applicant off of nicotine. Here, the applicant has a longstanding history of coronary artery disease status post coronary artery stenting. The applicant was/is still smoking, at age 68. Provision of nicotine patches would be of benefit here, in an effort to reduce the applicant's risk of further adverse cardiovascular events. Therefore, the request was medically necessary.