

Case Number:	CM14-0217155		
Date Assigned:	01/07/2015	Date of Injury:	05/14/2012
Decision Date:	03/03/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/25/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/29/2014

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. 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: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Internal 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:

This 34 year old male reportedly sustained a work related injury on May 14, 2012 due to a head injury. Diagnoses include post concussive syndrome with residual headaches and right hearing loss, lumbar degenerative disc disease (DDD), bilateral sciatica and chronic upper and lower back pain. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of lumbar spine in 2012 revealed disc protrusion and degenerative disc disease (DDD). Primary treating physician visit dated December 2, 2014 provides the injured worker has had increased sciatic symptoms due to not having his Amitriptyline and Neurontin. There is mention of neuropsychological treatment completed in 2013 with some improvement. Of note is mention of 40% reduction of sciatic pain with use of Neurontin. Physical exam showed tenderness on palpation of thoracic and lumbar spine and slight crepitus of the right knee. He is considered permanent and stationary. No other medical records were supplied. On November 25, 2014 utilization review denied a request received November 18, 2014 for Neurontin 300 mg three times daily quantity 90 with one refill. Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) guidelines were utilized in the determination. Application for independent medical review (IMR) is dated December 29, 2014.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Neurontin 300 milligrams three times daily, quantity 90 with 1 refill: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 15, 16, 18, 68, 67, 93-94.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Gabapentin (Neurontin) Page(s): 18-19.

Decision rationale: Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that Gabapentin (Neurontin) is considered as a first-line treatment for neuropathic pain. Gabapentin should not be abruptly discontinued. The progress report dated December 2, 2014 documented the diagnoses of chronic upper and lower back pain, bilateral sciatica, and lumbar degenerative disc disease. Physical examination demonstrated reduced sensation to light touch in the L4 and L5 dermatomes of the right lower extremity and reduced sensation to light touch in the C6 distribution of the right upper extremity. The patient reported that Neurontin helps with sciatica symptoms in the lower extremities. MRI magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the lumbar spine dated October 15, 2012 demonstrated degenerative disc disease. The medical records document neuropathic pain and benefit from Neurontin (Gabapentin). Per MTUS, Gabapentin is considered as a first-line treatment for neuropathic pain. The request for Gabapentin is supported by MTUS guidelines. Therefore, the request for Neurontin (Gabapentin) is medically necessary.