

Case Number:	CM15-0010372		
Date Assigned:	01/27/2015	Date of Injury:	06/07/2011
Decision Date:	03/18/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/30/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/19/2015

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: New Jersey, Michigan, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Neuromuscular 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 40 year old man sustained an industrial injury on 6/7/2011. The mechanism of injury is not detailed. Current diagnoses include neck sprain and strain and pain in joint, shoulder region. Treatment has included oral medications. Physician notes dated 1/21/2015, show continued complaints of left shoulder pain, left wrist pain, left neck pain, an difficulty falling asleep due to pain, decreased muscle mass and strength. The pain is rated 4-8/10 in the different areas of identified pain. Recommendations include urine drug testing, internal medicine consultation, and Norco. On 12/30/2014, Utilization Review evaluated a prescription for Oxycontin 10 mg #28 by mouth twice per day as needed for pain, that was submitted on 1/19/2015. The UR physician noted that failure to respond to a time limited course of opioids leads to the suggestion of reassessment and consideration of alternative therapy. This is listed as an "N" drug per ODG formulary, however, there is no documentation of failure of a "Y" drug in this class of medication. The MTUS, ACOEM Guidelines, (or ODG) was cited. The request was denied and subsequently appealed to Independent Medical Review.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Oxycontin 10mg #28 1 by Mouth Twice A Day as Needed For Pain: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Criteria for use of opioids Page(s): 76-79.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, Norco (Hydrocodone/Acetaminophen) is a synthetic opioid indicated for the pain management but not recommended as a first line oral analgesic. In addition and according to MTUS guidelines, ongoing use of opioids should follow specific rules: (a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed, and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy. (b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. (c) Office: 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 non adherent) 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). The monitoring of these outcomes over time should affect therapeutic decisions and provide a framework. There is justification for the use of opioids in this case. There is no documentation of functional and pain improvement with previous use of Oxycontin. There is no documentation of continuous compliance of patient to his medications. Therefore, the prescription of Oxycontin 10mg #28 1 by mouth twice a day as needed for pain is not medically necessary.