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| Case Number: | CM15-0012212 | | |
| Date Assigned: | 01/30/2015 | Date of Injury: | 01/12/2005 |
| Decision Date: | 03/23/2015 | UR Denial Date: | 01/05/2015 |
| Priority: | Standard | Application Received: | 01/22/2015 |

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:

The injured worker was a 37 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury, January 12, 2005. The injured worker was diagnosed with right-sided cervical myofascial pain, radiculopathy, right thoracic outlet syndrome and carpal tunnel syndrome. The injured worker previously received the following treatments of Norco, Motrin, voltaren gel, exercise regimen, random urine drug screening, TENS (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulator) unit, TheraCane and three trigger point injections and treadmill exercises and walking. According to progress note of December 22, 2014, the injured workers chief complaint was right-sided cervical myofascial pain, radiculopathy and thoracic outlet syndrome. On December 22, 2014, the primary treating physician requested refills for prescriptions for Norco and Ibuprofen. On January 5, 2015, the utilization review denied prescription authorizations for Norco 7.5/325gm #60 and Ibuprofen 800mg #60. The utilization Reviewer referenced MTUS and ODG guidelines for the decision.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco/Hydrocodone/APAP 7.5/325mg #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Hydrocodone/Acetaminophen.

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. 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>According to the patient file, there is no objective documentation of pain and functional improvement to justify continuous use of Norco. Norco was used for longtime without documentation of functional improvement or evidence of return to work or improvement of activity of daily living. Therefore, the prescription of Norco 7.5/325mg #60 is not medically necessary.

Motrin 800mg #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Anti-inflammatory medications.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Naproxen Page(s): 66.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, Motrin is indicated for relief of pain related to osteoarthritis and back pain for the lowest dose and shortest period of time. There is no documentation that the shortest and the lowest dose of Motrin was used. There is no clear documentation of pain and functional improvement with NSAID use. Therefore, the prescription of Motrin 800mg #60 is not medically necessary.