

Case Number:	CM15-0118744		
Date Assigned:	06/29/2015	Date of Injury:	02/09/1998
Decision Date:	08/04/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/12/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/19/2015

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: California, Hawaii

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 55 year old male sustained an industrial injury to the neck and back on 2/9/98. Recent treatment included medication management and home exercise. Documentation did not disclose recent magnetic resonance imaging. In a PR-2 dated 6/3/15, the injured worker complained of intermittent pain in the shoulder and neck, rated 3-6/10 on the visual analog scale. The injured worker could not turn his neck despite range of motion exercise and heat application. Urine drug screen from 2/15/15 was consistent with prescribed medications. Physical exam was remarkable for tenderness to palpation to the bilateral lumbo-sacral-iliac junctions with very tight paraspinal lumbar muscles with significant trigger points and negative bilateral straight leg raise. Motor strength was 5/5 to bilateral lower extremities with absent Achilles tendon reflex. Current diagnoses included chronic pain syndrome, lumbago, disorders of tendons in shoulder region, bicipital tenosynovitis, cervicgia, neck sprain/strain and long term use of medications. The treatment plan included continuing home exercise and continuing current medications included MS Contin, Tizanidine and Oxycodone.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MS (morphine sulfate) Contin 60mg, #150: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines
Page(s): 28, 78.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids
Page(s): 74-96.

Decision rationale: The patient presents with pain affecting the neck, right shoulder, and low back. The current request is for MS (morphine sulfate) Contin 60mg, #150. The treating physician states in the report dated 3/5/15, "MS Contin 60mg 3 tabs q8h. The plan is to taper one pill per day per month of MS Contin." (20B) The treating physician also documents that the patient's urine drug screen was consistent with his prescribed medications and that opiate medication helps reduce the patient's pain. For chronic opiate use, the MTUS Guidelines pages 88 and 89 states, "Pain should be assessed at each visit, and functioning should be measured at 6-month intervals using a numerical scale or validated instrument." MTUS page 78 also requires documentation of the 4A's (analgesia, ADLs, adverse side effects, and aberrant behavior), as well as "pain assessment" or outcome measures that include current pain, average pain, least pain, intensity of pain after taking the opioid, time it takes for medication to work and duration of pain relief. In this case, the treating physician has documented that the patient experiences reduced pain with the medications, is able to perform ADLs, and has not had any side effects or aberrant behaviors. The current request is medically necessary.