

Case Number:	CM15-0118977		
Date Assigned:	06/29/2015	Date of Injury:	09/30/2002
Decision Date:	07/31/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/15/2015
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

Certification(s)/Specialty: Emergency 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 is a 54-year-old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 9/30/02. The injured worker was diagnosed as having multilevel cervical discopathy with right upper extremity radiculopathy, status post right shoulder arthroscopy, status post bilateral carpal tunnel release with recurrence, thoracic strain/arthrosis, lumbosacral strain/arthrosis/discopathy with radiculopathy, neurologic diagnoses, sleep disturbance, and psychiatric diagnosis. Treatment to date has included acupuncture, epidural steroid injections, a home exercise program, and medication. The injured worker had been taking Lorazepam since at least 9/11/14 and Norco since at least 1/16/15. Currently, the injured worker complains of pain in the neck radiation to the right upper extremity. Anxiety and depression was also noted. The treating physician requested authorization for Lorazepam 1mg #30 and Norco 10/325mg #60.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Lorazepam 1mg, #30: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Benzodiazepines Page(s): 23.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Benzodiazepines, Page 24 Page(s): 24.

Decision rationale: The requested Lorazepam 1 mg, #30, is not medically necessary. CA MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines, Benzodiazepines, Page 24, note that benzodiazepines are "Not recommended for long-term use because long-term efficacy is unproven and there is a risk of dependence." The injured worker has pain in the neck radiation to the right upper extremity. Anxiety and depression was also noted. The treating physician has not documented the medical indication for continued use of this benzodiazepine medication, nor objective evidence of derived functional benefit from its previous use. The criteria noted above not having been met, Lorazepam 1 mg, #30 is not medically necessary.

Norco 10/325mg, #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids for chronic pain Page(s): 80.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, On-Going Management, Pages 78-80, Opioids for Chronic Pain, Pages 80-82 Page(s): 78-82.

Decision rationale: The requested Norco 10/325mg, #60 , is not medically necessary. CA MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines, Opioids, On-Going Management, Pages 78-80, Opioids for Chronic Pain, Pages 80-82, recommend continued use of this opiate for the treatment of moderate to severe pain, with documented objective evidence of derived functional benefit, as well as documented opiate surveillance measures. The injured worker has pain in the neck radiation to the right upper extremity. Anxiety and depression was also noted. The treating physician has not documented VAS pain quantification with and without medications, duration of treatment, and objective evidence of derived functional benefit such as improvements in activities of daily living or reduced work restrictions or decreased reliance on medical intervention, nor measures of opiate surveillance including an executed narcotic pain contract or urine drug screening. The criteria noted above not having been met, Norco 10/325mg, #60 is not medically necessary.