

Case Number:	CM15-0119344		
Date Assigned:	06/29/2015	Date of Injury:	06/05/2013
Decision Date:	07/28/2015	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: 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:

The injured worker is a 51-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 6/05/2013. He reported a low back injury during an activity involving shoveling. He has undergone multiple lumbar surgeries including lumbar fusion. Diagnoses include mechanical low back pain, degenerative joint disease of lumbar spine, and radiculopathy. Treatments to date include medication therapy and physical therapy. Currently, he complained of possible nausea and vomiting related to the Butrans patch. He also complained of low back pain. On 6/4/15, the physical examination documented decreased range of motion and decreased sensation. The plan of care included Butrans Patch 15mcg/hour, #4, apply one patch every seven days for pain with two refills.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Butrans 15mcg #4 with 2 refills: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 26-27.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Buprenorphine HCL, pages 26-27.

Decision rationale: Submitted reports have not demonstrated the indication or medical necessity for this medication request. Per MTUS Chronic Pain, BuTrans or Buprenorphine is a scheduled III controlled substance recommended for treatment of opiate addiction or opiate agonist dependence. Request has been reviewed previously and non-certified for rationale of lack of pain contract, indication, and documentation of opioid addiction. Buprenorphine has one of the most high profile side effects of a scheduled III medication. The patient in this case, has complained of possible nausea and vomiting related to Butrans yet the medication is refilled with an additional 2 refills. Per the Guidelines, opioid use in the setting of chronic, non-malignant, or neuropathic pain is controversial and use should be reserved for those with improved attributable functional outcomes. This is not apparent here as this patient reports no change in pain relief, no functional improvement in daily activities, and has not decreased in medical utilization or self-independence continuing to treat for chronic pain symptoms. There is also no notation of any functional improvement while on the patch nor is there any recent urine drug screening results in accordance to pain contract needed in this case. Without sufficient monitoring of narcotic safety, efficacy, and compliance for this individual along with no weaning process attempted for this chronic injury. Medical necessity for continued treatment has not been established for Buprenorphine. The Butrans 15mcg #4 with 2 refills is not medically necessary and appropriate.