MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM15-0171876		
Date Assigned:	09/14/2015	Date of Injury:	04/16/2011
Decision Date:	10/13/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/20/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/01/2015

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: North Carolina
Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

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 55 year old male who sustained a work related injury April 16, 2011, described as cumulative trauma secondary to job duties, with pain to the low back and bilateral knees. Treatment included work restriction, physical therapy, pain medication, and series of injections x 3 to each knee, x-rays and MRI studies. Past history included hypertension, arthroscopic surgery, meniscal repair right knee 2009, and arthroscopic surgery, meniscal repair left knee August 19, 2014. According to a primary treating physician's initial report dated August 12, 2015, the injured worker presented with complaints of constant low back pain which radiates down both extremities extending to the feet. He rates his pain 2 out of 10 at best and 8 out of 10 at worst. The pain is aggravated by bending, twisting and turning and increased with prolonged sitting, standing and walking. He is unable to sit, stand, or walk for periods longer than 20 to30 minutes. Physical examination revealed; ambulates with antalgic gait; bilateral mild knee swelling noted, no loss of muscle bilk in either lower extremity; localized tenderness present about the medial joint line of both knees with additional tenderness in the lower paralumbar region with mild muscle guarding only on the right side; no sensory deficit is present in wither leg. Apley's compression and distraction tests are mildly positive bilaterally; straight leg test is positive, right only at approximately 20 degrees. Impressions are documented as lumbar radiculitis; status post bilateral knee surgery; persistent bilateral knee arthropathy. Treatment plan included a dilute Kenalog injection administered to right knee, a lumbar brace and heating pad provided, a urine drug screen administered during visit, and medication dispensed. At issue, is the retrospective request for authorization for Ultram 150mg # 60. A review of diagnostic

studies; MRI of the lumbar spine July 14, 2011 and Electrodiagnostic studies July 14, 2011, are present in the medical record. A urine toxicology report, dated June 5, 2015, is present in the medical record. According to utilization review dated August 20, 2015, the retrospective request (date of service August 14, 2015) for Naprosyn 550mg #60 and Protonix 20mg #60 has been certified. The retrospective request (date of service August 14, 2015) for Ultram ER 150mg #60 has been modified to Ultram ER 150mg #45. The remaining Ultram ER 150mg #15 is non-certified.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Retro: Ultram ER 150mg #60 DOS: 08/14/2015: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Opioids for chronic pain.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on opioids states for ongoing management: On-Going Management. Actions Should Include: (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 mos 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 nonadherent) 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 for documentation of the clinical use of these controlled drugs. (Passik, 2000) (d) Home: To aid in pain and functioning assessment, the patient should be requested to keep a pain dairy that includes entries such as pain triggers, and incidence of end-of-dose pain. It should be emphasized that using this diary will help in tailoring the opioid dose. This should not be a requirement for pain management. (e) Use of drug screening or inpatient treatment with issues of abuse, addiction, or poor pain control. (f) Documentation of misuse of medications (doctor- shopping, uncontrolled drug escalation, drug diversion). (g) Continuing review of overall situation with regard to nonopioid means of pain control. (h) Consideration of a consultation with a multidisciplinary pain clinic if doses of Opioids are required beyond what is usually required for the condition or pain does not improve on opioids in 3 months. Consider a psych consult if there is evidence of depression, anxiety or irritability.

Consider an addiction medicine consult if there is evidence of substance misuse. When to Continue Opioids (a) If the patient has returned to work, (b) If the patient has improved functioning and pain(Washington, 2002) (Colorado, 2002) (Ontario, 2000) (VA/DoD, 2003) (Maddox-AAPM/APS, 1997) (Wisconsin, 2004) (Warfield, 2004) The long-term use of this medication class is not recommended per the California MTUS unless there documented evidence of benefit with measurable outcome measures and improvement in function. There is documented significant decrease in objective pain measures such as VAS scores for significant periods of time. There are no objective measures of improvement of function. Therefore all criteria for the ongoing use of opioids have not been met and the request is not medically necessary.