

Case Number:	CM15-0175541		
Date Assigned:	09/16/2015	Date of Injury:	11/02/2010
Decision Date:	10/26/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/31/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/07/2015

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, District of Columbia, Maryland
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, Pain Management

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 60 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 11-2-10. The injured worker reported pain in the low back and right buttock, neck and bilateral hand pain. A review of the medical records indicates that the injured worker is undergoing treatments for lumbar spondylosis, degenerative disc disease cervical, degenerative disc disease lumbar and back pain. Medical records dated 8-6-15 indicate "low back pain and right buttock pain that is intermittent and described as sharp dull and achy." Provider documentation dated 8-6-15 indicated "neck pain that is intermittent...Bilateral hand pain that is provoked by use of the hands." Provider documentation dated 8-3-15 noted the work status as permanent and stationary. Treatment has included Xanax since at least April of 2015, exercise, cognitive behavioral therapy, Tramadol, Norco, cervical and lumbar spine magnetic resonance imaging (12-18-13), heat, ice, stretching, exercise, acupuncture treatment, chiropractic treatments, nerve conduction velocity study (2011), electromyography (2011), Flexeril and Motrin. Objective findings dated 8-6-15 were notable for normal gait "no lower extremity edema". The treating physician indicates that the urine drug testing result (3-2-15) showed no aberration. The original utilization review (8-31-15) denied a request for Norco 10-325 milligrams quantity of 60 with 2 refills and Tramadol 50 milligrams quantity of 60 with 1 refill.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 10/325mg #60 with 2 refills: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

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

Decision rationale: Per MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines p78 regarding on-going management of opioids "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 any 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." Review of the available medical records reveals no documentation to support the medical necessity of norco nor any documentation addressing the '4 A's' domains, which is a recommended practice for the on-going management of opioids. Specifically, the notes do not appropriately review and document pain relief, functional status improvement, appropriate medication use, or side effects. The MTUS considers this list of criteria for initiation and continuation of opioids in the context of efficacy required to substantiate medical necessity, and they do not appear to have been addressed by the treating physician in the documentation available for review. Efforts to rule out aberrant behavior (e.g. CURES report, UDS, opiate agreement) are necessary to assure safe usage and establish medical necessity. It was noted that UDS dated 3/2/15 was consistent with prescribed medication. As MTUS recommends to discontinue opioids if there is no overall improvement in function, medical necessity cannot be affirmed. Furthermore, the request for 3 month supply is not medically necessary as it does not allow for timely reassessment of efficacy.

Tramadol 50mg #60 with 1 refill: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

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

Decision rationale: Per MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines p78 regarding on-going management of opioids "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 any 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." Review of the available medical

records reveals no documentation to support the medical necessity of tramadol nor any documentation addressing the '4 A's' domains, which is a recommended practice for the on-going management of opioids. Specifically, the notes do not appropriately review and document pain relief, functional status improvement, appropriate medication use, or side effects. The MTUS considers this list of criteria for initiation and continuation of opioids in the context of efficacy required to substantiate medical necessity, and they do not appear to have been addressed by the treating physician in the documentation available for review. Efforts to rule out aberrant behavior (e.g. CURES report, UDS, opiate agreement) are necessary to assure safe usage and establish medical necessity. It was noted that UDS dated 3/2/15 was consistent with prescribed medication. As MTUS recommends to discontinue opioids if there is no overall improvement in function, medical necessity cannot be affirmed. Furthermore, the request for 2 month supply is not medically necessary as it does not allow for timely reassessment of efficacy.