

Case Number:	CM15-0178413		
Date Assigned:	09/18/2015	Date of Injury:	01/03/1998
Decision Date:	10/23/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/18/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/10/2015

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 (IW) is a 47 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 01-03-1998. The injured worker was diagnosed as having post-laminectomy syndrome, lumbar region, myofascial pain, and reactive depression. Treatment to date has included surgery, testing, psychiatric care, a trial of an intrathecal pump (05-2012) and medications. Current medications include Opana ER, Lyrica, Soma, and Valium. Opana is listed in his medications since at least 12-17-2012. In the provider notes of 08-06-2015, the worker complains of pain both knees, both legs, and pain in both feet. He is seen with a request for pain meds refills. Oral meds give an all over 50% improvement with functions with activities of daily living. He states his pain is constant and he sleeps only 3-4 hours a night. The pain is rated a 6-7 on a scale of 0-to 10 with medications and a 9 on a scale of 0-10 without medications. Objectively, he has pain in all extremes of range of motion of the lumbar spine. His flexion is 60 degrees and extension is 10 degrees. On exam, he has tenderness of the lumbar spine, a negative Homan's, minimum edema, and positive tenderness in the right ankle proximal with sensation grossly intact distally. The treatment plan is for x-rays for right lower extremity-ankle to rule out further pathology, and find a PCP for blood pressure management. He is to have medication refills, a weight loss diet, a home exercise program, and Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs with ice to areas of pain. A request for authorization was submitted for Opana ER 30 mg #60, 1 tablet every 12 hours. A utilization review decision 08-18-2015 non-certified the request.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Opana ER 30mg #60, 1 tab every 12 hours: Overturned

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 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 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 diary 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 non-opioid 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 improvement in VAS scores for significant periods of time with pain decreasing from a 9/10 to a 6/10. There are objective measurements of improvement in function or activity specifically due to the medication. Therefore, all criteria for the ongoing use of opioids have been met and the request is medically necessary.