

Case Number:	CM15-0026353		
Date Assigned:	02/18/2015	Date of Injury:	05/01/2000
Decision Date:	04/03/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/04/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/11/2015

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: New Jersey, Michigan, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Neuromuscular 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 62 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 5/1/2000. The current diagnoses are lumbar radiculopathy, post laminectomy syndrome of the lumbar spine, bilateral knee arthritis, and status post total knee replacement. Currently, the injured worker complains of low back pain with bilateral lower extremity paresthesia. The back pain is described as constant, stabbing and sharp. Additionally, he reports bilateral knee pain. The knee pain is described as occasional and achy. Treatment to date has included medications, modified activity, and back brace. The treating physician is requesting Duragesic- 50 Film ER #15 and Percocet 5/325mg #40, which is now under review. On 2/4/2015, Utilization Review had non-certified a request for Duragesic- 50 Film ER #15 and Percocet 5/325mg #40. The Duragesic and Percocet were modified to allow for slow taper of 10%. The California MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines were cited.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

15 Duragesic- 50 Film ER: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Duragesic (fentanyl transdermal system) Page(s): 68.

Decision rationale: “Duragesic (fentanyl transdermal system). Not recommended as a first-line therapy. Duragesic is the trade name of a fentanyl transdermal therapeutic system, which releases fentanyl, a potent opioid, slowly through the skin. It is manufactured by [REDACTED] and marketed by [REDACTED] (both subsidiaries of [REDACTED]). The FDA-approved product labeling states that Duragesic is indicated in the management of chronic pain in patients who require continuous opioid analgesia for pain that cannot be managed by other means.” In this case, the patient continued to have pain despite the use of high dose of opioids. There is no documentation of continuous monitoring of adverse reactions and of patient's compliance with his medication. In addition, there is no documentation that the patient developed tolerance to opioids or need continuous around the clock opioid administration. Therefore, the prescription of 15 Duragesic- 50 Film ER is not medically necessary.

40 Tablets Of Percocet 5/325mg: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Criteria for use of opioids Page(s): 76-79.

Decision rationale: According to MTUS guidelines, ongoing use of opioids should follow specific rules: ”(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.” The patient have been using opioids without recent documentation of full control of pain and without any recent documentation of functional or quality of life improvement. There is no clear documentation of patient improvement in level of function, quality of life, adequate follow up for absence of side effects and aberrant behavior with a previous use of narcotics. There is no justification for the use of several narcotics. Therefore, the prescription of Percocet 5/325mg #40 is not medically necessary.

