

Case Number:	CM15-0065740		
Date Assigned:	04/13/2015	Date of Injury:	10/01/2008
Decision Date:	05/12/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/26/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/07/2015

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: 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:

This 58-year-old male sustained an industrial injury to the neck and back on 10/1/08. Previous treatment included magnetic resonance imaging, cervical fusion, epidural steroid injections, injections, physical therapy, acupuncture, home exercise and medications. In a pain medicine reevaluation dated 2/18/15, physical exam was remarkable for cervical spine with tenderness to palpation, spasms bilaterally, restricted range of motion and cervical brace in place and lumbar spine with tenderness to palpation, spasms, decreased range of motion and decreased sensation and strength along the Lr-S1 distribution and decreased strength along the L4-S1. Current diagnoses included chronic pain, cervical spine facet arthropathy, cervical spine failed back surgery syndrome, cervical spine radiculopathy, status post cervical fusion, lumbar spine radiculopathy, lumbar spine stenosis, lumbar spine annular tear and medication related dyspepsia. The treatment plan included continuing home exercise and medications (Omeprazole, Lidocaine patch, Lunesta, Capsaicin cream, Neurontin, Percocet and Butrans patch).

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Percocet 10/325 mg Qty 120: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74-95, 124.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Criteria for use of opioids Page(s): 179.

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 has been using opioids for long period of time without recent documentation of full control of pain and without any 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 10/325mg, #120 is not medically necessary.