

Case Number:	CM15-0070713		
Date Assigned:	04/20/2015	Date of Injury:	07/30/2012
Decision Date:	06/11/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/05/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/14/2015

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: Florida

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 54 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 02/30/12. Initial complaints include right shoulder pain. Initial diagnoses are not available. Treatments to date include medications, cortisone injections, bilateral shoulder surgeries, and physical therapy. Diagnostic studies include x-rays. Current complaints include bilateral shoulder pain. Current diagnoses include status post bilateral shoulder surgeries. In a progress note dated 02/13/15 the treating provider reports the plan of care as continue with pain management specialist, right trapezius muscles trigger point injection, and Norco. The requested treatments are Norco and right trapezius muscles trigger point injections.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 10MG #90: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): Criteria for use of opioids, page(s) 110-115.

Decision rationale: In accordance with California MTUS guidelines, narcotics for chronic pain management should be continued if (a) If the patient has returned to work, (b) If the patient has improved functioning and pain. MTUS guidelines also recommend that narcotic medications only be prescribed for chronic pain when there is evidence of a pain management contract being upheld with proof of frequent urine drug screens. Regarding this patient's case, there is no objective evidence of functional improvement. Likewise, this request is not considered medically necessary.

Outpatient Trigger Point Injection On The Right Trapezius Muscles: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Trigger Point Injection.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Trigger Point Injections Page(s): 122.

Decision rationale: MTUS guidelines state regarding Trigger point injections, "Recommended only for myofascial pain syndrome as indicated below, with limited lasting value. Not recommended for radicular pain. Trigger point injections with an anesthetic such as bupivacaine are recommended for non-resolving trigger points, but the addition of a corticosteroid is not generally recommended. Not recommended for radicular pain. A trigger point is a discrete focal tenderness located in a palpable taut band of skeletal muscle, which produces a local twitch in response to stimulus to the band. Trigger points may be present in up to 33-50% of the adult population. Myofascial pain syndrome is a regional painful muscle condition with a direct relationship between a specific trigger point and its associated pain region. These injections may occasionally be necessary to maintain function in those with myofascial problems when myofascial trigger points are present on examination. Not recommended for typical back pain or neck pain. (Graff-Radford, 2004) (Nelemans-Cochrane, 2002) F or fibromyalgia syndrome, trigger point injections have not been proven effective. (Goldenberg, 2004)" MTUS guidelines go on to state the criteria for trigger point injections, "Trigger point injections with a local anesthetic may be recommended for the treatment of chronic low back or neck pain with myofascial pain syndrome when all of the following criteria are met: (1) Documentation of circumscribed trigger points with evidence upon palpation of a twitch response as well as referred pain; (2) Symptoms have persisted for more than three months; (3) Medical management therapies such as ongoing stretching exercises, physical therapy, NSAIDs and muscle relaxants have failed to control pain; (4) Radiculopathy is not present (by exam, imaging, or neuro-testing); (5) Not more than 3-4 injections per session; (6) No repeat injections unless a greater than 50% pain relief is obtained for six weeks after an injection and there is documented evidence of functional improvement; (7) Frequency should not be at an interval less than two months; (8) Trigger point injections with any substance (e.g., saline or glucose) other than local anesthetic with or without steroid are not recommended.(Colorado, 2002) (BlueCross BlueShield, 2004)"Regarding this patient's case, utilization review is correct that a positive trigger sign is not documented on the physical exam. Likewise, this request does not satisfy MTUS criteria, and is not considered medically necessary.

