

Case Number:	CM15-0093441		
Date Assigned:	05/21/2015	Date of Injury:	04/21/2006
Decision Date:	06/24/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/27/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/14/2015

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: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 58 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 4/21/2006. The current diagnoses are status post left lumbar laminectomy syndrome, facet arthropathy, lumbar stenosis, and chronic pain. According to the progress report dated 1/2/2015, the injured worker complains of constant, stabbing pain across the low back, left worse than right. He reports radiating pain, weakness, and numbness down his left lower extremity to the level of the toes. He states his activities of daily living are severely limited due to pain. His pain wakes him up at night. The pain is rated 6/10 on a subjective pain scale. The physical examination reveals tenderness to palpation over the lumbar spine extending into the left paraspinal region and over the battery. He has decreased sensation of the left L4 through S1 dermatome. The current medications are Tylenol, Aleve, and Advil. Treatment to date has included medication management, LSO brace, transforaminal epidural steroid injection (good relief), spinal cord stimulator, and surgical intervention. The plan of care includes prescription for Butrans.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Butrans DIS 10mcg/hr day supply: 30 QTY: 4 with 1 refill: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Buprenorphine Page(s): 26-27.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Buprenorphine HCL, pages 26-27.

Decision rationale: Submitted reports have not demonstrated the indication or medical necessity for this medication request. Per MTUS Chronic Pain, BuTrans or Buprenorphine is a scheduled III controlled substance recommended for treatment of opiate addiction or opiate agonist dependence. Request has been reviewed previously and non-certified for rationale of lack of pain contract, indication, and documentation of opioid addiction. Buprenorphine has one of the most high profile side effects of a scheduled III medication. Per the Guidelines, opioid use in the setting of chronic, non-malignant, or neuropathic pain is controversial and use should be reserved for those with improved attributable functional outcomes. This is not apparent here as this patient reports no change in pain relief, no functional improvement in daily activities, and has not decreased in medical utilization or self-independence continuing to treat for chronic pain symptoms. There is also no notation of any functional improvement while on the patch nor is there any recent urine drug screening results in accordance to pain contract needed in this case. Without sufficient monitoring of narcotic safety, efficacy, and compliance for this individual along with no weaning process attempted for this chronic injury. Medical necessity for continued treatment has not been established for Buprenorphine. The Butrans DIS 10mcg/hr QTY: 4 with 1 refill is not medically necessary or appropriate.