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| Case Number: | CM15-0097446 | | |
| Date Assigned: | 05/29/2015 | Date of Injury: | 02/14/2008 |
| Decision Date: | 06/29/2015 | UR Denial Date: | 05/05/2015 |
| Priority: | Standard | Application Received: | 05/21/2015 |

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, Alabama, 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 60-year-old man sustained an industrial injury on 2/14/2008. The mechanism of injury is not detailed. Diagnoses include status post surgery of the cervical spine and left shoulder as well as psychiatric complaints. Treatment has included oral medications, surgical interventions, home exercise program, and physical therapy. Physician notes dated 1/7/2015 show complaints of cervical and lumbar spine pain with radicular symptoms to the bilateral upper and lower extremities. Recommendations include treatment with pain medicine specialist, continue home exercise program, continue physical therapy, psychiatric care, and follow up in six weeks.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Vicodin ES 7.5/300mg #100: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 76-80.

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 4A'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 "4A'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. Vicodin is a short acting opioid recommended for a short period of time in case of a breakthrough pain or in combination with long acting medications in case of chronic pain. There is no clear evidence of a breakthrough of pain. There is no documentation of pain and functional improvement with previous use of Narcotics. Therefore, the request for Vicodin ES 7.5/300mg #100 is not medically necessary.