

Case Number:	CM15-0097813		
Date Assigned:	07/15/2015	Date of Injury:	04/11/2011
Decision Date:	08/13/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/12/2015
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: North Carolina

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 44-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 4/11/2011. He reported cumulative injuries to the low back, left shoulder, right knee, and psychological symptoms. Diagnoses include depressive disorder, pain disorder, torn meniscus. Treatments to date include activity modification, medication therapy, physical therapy, psychotherapy, and therapeutic injections. Currently, he complained of ongoing pain. Pain was rated 6-7/10 VAS with medications and 8-9/10 without medications. The medication was noted to provide relief for three to four hours increasing functional ability and allowing him to continue to work. On 4/10/15, the physical examination documented no new acute clinical findings. The plan of care included Neurontin 600mg, one tablet twice a day #60; and Norco 10/325mg tablets, one tablet twice a day #60.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Neurontin 600mg #60: Overturned

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Neurontin, Antiepilepsy drugs.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines gabapentin Page(s): 18.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on Neurontin states: Gabapentin (Neurontin, Gabarone, generic available) has been shown to be effective for treatment of diabetic painful neuropathy and postherpetic neuralgia and has been considered as a first-line treatment for neuropathic pain. (Backonja, 2002) (ICSI, 2007) (Knotkova, 2007) (Eisenberg, 2007) (Attal, 2006) This RCT concluded that gabapentin monotherapy appears to be efficacious for the treatment of pain and sleep interference associated with diabetic peripheral neuropathy and exhibits positive effects on mood and quality of life. (Backonja, 1998) It has been given FDA approval for treatment of post-herpetic neuralgia. The number needed to treat (NNT) for overall neuropathic pain is 4. It has a more favorable side-effect profile than Carbamazepine, with a number needed to harm of 2.5. (Wiffen2-Cochrane, 2005) (Zaremba, 2006) Gabapentin in combination with morphine has been studied for treatment of diabetic neuropathy and postherpetic neuralgia. When used in combination the maximum tolerated dosage of both drugs was lower than when each was used as a single agent and better analgesia occurred at lower doses of each. (Gilron-NEJM, 2005) Recommendations involving combination therapy require further study. The patient has the diagnosis of neuropathic pain with symptoms. Therefore, the request is medically necessary.