

Case Number:	CM14-0203154		
Date Assigned:	12/15/2014	Date of Injury:	10/28/2013
Decision Date:	12/08/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/05/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/04/2014

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: Neurology, Pain Management

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 then said 23 year old female sustained an industrial injury on 10-28-2013. According to a partially legible hand written progress report dated 10-29-2014, the injured worker was seen for follow up and refill. She was status post medial branch block which decreased her pain from 8 to 2 on a scale of 1-10. Current medications included Norco and Ibuprofen. Current pain was rated 6 and was located in the low back. She ambulated without assistance. Range of motion in the lumbar spine was within normal limits but uncomfortable. Straight leg raise was negative. Facet load was positive. Neurovascular exam was noted as within normal limits. Sensory was intact. Motor was 5 out of 5. Deep tendon reflexes were plus 2 out of 4. Assessment included lumbar facet arthropathy. The treatment plan included Norco 5-325 mg #30 and continuation of Ibuprofen. Work restrictions included limited or no bending and or stooping. The provider did not document in the 10-29-2014 report how long the injured worker had been utilizing Norco. There were no progress reports prior to the 10-29-2014 report submitted for review. Urine drug toxicology reports were not submitted for review. On 11-05-2014, Utilization Review non-certified the request for retrospective Norco 5-325 mg #30 date of service 10-29-2014.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Retrospective request for Norco 5/325mg #30 DOS: 10/29/2014: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) pain, opioids.

Decision rationale: The medical records report ongoing pain that is helped subjectively by continued use of opioid. The medical records do not indicate or document any formal opioid risk mitigation tool use or assessment or indicate use of UDS or other risk tool. ODG supports 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 nonadherent) 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 for documentation of the clinical use of these controlled drugs. Given the medical records do not document such ongoing monitoring, the medical records do not support the continued use of opioids such as norco. The request is not medically necessary.