

Case Number:	CM14-0141089		
Date Assigned:	09/10/2014	Date of Injury:	01/27/2013
Decision Date:	10/06/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/26/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/02/2014

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. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Family Medicine and is licensed to practice in New Jersey. 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

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 case involves a 44 year old male who was injured on 1/27/2013. He was diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome, cervical spine herniation, cervical brachial syndrome, shoulder sprain/strain, and right wrist/hand sprain/strain. He was treated with acupuncture, chiropractor treatments, physical therapy, and topical analgesics. On 1/15/14, the worker was seen by his general surgeon complaining of persistent pain in the neck with radiation down both shoulders rated at 7/10 on the pain scale. There was no list of medications documented. He was then recommended acupuncture, chiropractic sessions, topical analgesic medications, a pain management referral, a functional capacity evaluation, a urine test for toxicology, and an orthopedic referral. On 2/14/14, he was seen by another physician (orthopedic?) complaining of pain in his right hand. Again, there was no documentation of the worker's medications, if he was taking any, although he was recommended to continue his topical creams. He also recommended acupuncture, chiropractic/physical therapy, pain management referral, and urine testing for toxicology, which was submitted for approval.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Urine toxicology exam: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, criteria for use, Steps to take before a therapeutic tria.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Drug testing, Opioids Page(s): 43, 77, 78, 86.

Decision rationale: The MTUS Chronic Pain Guidelines state that urine drug screening tests may be used to assess for the use or the presence of illegal drugs. Drug screens, according to the MTUS, are appropriate when initiating opioids for the first time, and afterwards periodically in patients with issues of abuse, addiction, or poor pain control. The MTUS lists behaviors and factors that could be used as indicators for drug testing, and they include: multiple unsanctioned escalations in dose, lost or stolen medication, frequent visits to the pain center or emergency room, family members expressing concern about the patient's use of opioids, excessive numbers of calls to the clinic, family history of substance abuse, past problems with drugs and alcohol, history of legal problems, higher required dose of opioids for pain, dependence on cigarettes, psychiatric treatment history, multiple car accidents, and reporting fewer adverse symptoms from opioids. In the case of this worker, there was no evidence provided to the reviewer that would suggest he required drug testing. There was no record of him taking any opioids or other drugs with abuse potential, and there was no record of any past history that would suggest a high potential for drug abuse. Therefore, the urine toxicology testing is not medically necessary.