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| Case Number: | CM13-0065125 | | |
| Date Assigned: | 01/03/2014 | Date of Injury: | 11/02/2012 |
| Decision Date: | 11/10/2015 | UR Denial Date: | 11/13/2013 |
| Priority: | Standard | Application Received: | 12/12/2013 |

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, 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:

The injured worker is a 33-year-old male with an original date of injury of November 2, 2012. The injured worker has chronic low back pain, bilateral lower extremity pain, lumbar radiculopathy, disc herniation, lumbar disc disease, lumbar facet syndrome, and lumbar musculoligamentous strain. The disputed request is for Norco and MS Contin. A utilization review on November 13, 2013 had modified these requests. The request for MS Contin 30 mg by mouth twice a day number 128 was modified to the supply of 60. The stated rationale for this modification was that with twice daily dosing, a 30 day supply once a quantity of 60 and not 120 pills.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

MS Contin 30mg 1 PO BID #120: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Opioids, long-term assessment, Opioids, criteria for use.

Decision rationale: The Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines on pages 76-80 state the following criteria for the ongoing use of opioids, including: "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. (Passik, 2000)" In the case of this injured worker, the most recent progress note available for review are for dates of services in September and October 2013. It is noted that the request is for twice daily dosing and a one-month supply would be 60 pills of MS Contin. Patients on controlled medications often necessitate frequent monthly follow-up. Without further documentation, the request for 120 pills of MS Contin is not recommended and the utilization determination is upheld.