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Physician Pharmaceutical Review (PPR) Case Study

Jurisdiction: California
PRIUM Case ID: 218943, Claim # 087-06-28269
Review Date: 11/22/2010

The patient is a 37-year-old male who suffered an injury on 07/18/00, suffering from low back pain with sciatica to the bilateral lower extremities. The patient has continually declined the implantation of intrathecal pain pump and spinal cord stimulator. Within the past couple of years the treating physician had increased the dosage of Oxycontin without any corresponding increase in pain control. When questioned, the patient stated that he has been providing his cousin with these medications for treatment of his cousin's cancer. Although this behavior is illegal, this statement has never been verified with regard to his cousin's reported cancer condition and there remains a concern that the patient may be selling the OxyContin for financial profit. Random drug screens have shown no evidence that the patient has OxyContin or its metabolites in his system and is also positive for marijuana THC, tricyclic anti-depressants, and oxycodone.

Pharmacotherapy:

- OxyContin 80 mg (\$2,385.62 monthly cost)
- Hydromorphone HCL 8 mg (\$153.69 monthly cost)

This drug regimen incurs a monthly expense of **\$2,539.31**.

PRIUM's reviewing physician had discussion with the Physician's Assistant (PA) for the treating physician on 11/11/10. The PA confirmed the assessment that the patient was apparently not taking the prescription drugs and understood the ramifications of that based on the California MTUS Guidelines. The PA would not commit to anything beyond reducing the dosage of both drugs over time, but did confirm a desire to require more office visits (at least monthly) and more consistent use of random drug screens.

As of 07/01/11 (almost 8 months after the discussion), the drug regimen (as evidenced by drugs filled through the PBM) has changed to:

- Hydromorphone HCL 8mg (\$95.33 new monthly cost)
 - Quantity reduced from 180/month to 120/month

This is a situation where the treating physician (PA) did not want to commit verbally or in writing to implement changes but obviously had an "epiphany" due to this intervention since the OxyContin was discontinued in December and the Hydromorphone total dosage was reduced by decreasing the quantity of pills. This has resulted in a decrease in monthly costs from **\$2,539.31** to **\$95.33**. Since the date of the review, **total savings accrued is \$17,775.17**.