

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM13-0047746		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	12/27/2013	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	05/21/2006
<b>Decision Date:</b>	05/16/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	10/02/2013
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	11/04/2013

### 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. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Neurology, has a subspecialty in Neuromuscular Medicine and is licensed to practice in California. 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:

██████████ is a 43 year old man who sustained a work-related injury on May 25, 2006. Subsequently the patient developed chronic back pain. He underwent a lumbar surgery on August 10, 2010. The patient was diagnosed with chronic spine pain, left upper and lower extremity pain and chronic left knee pain. He patient was treated with Vicodin, Neurontin and Cymbalta. According to a note dated on September 11 2013, his physical examination demonstrated left knee tenderness, reduced cervical and lumbar range of motion with tenderness. The provider requested authorization to use Vicodin.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**VICODIN 5MG, EVERY 6 HOURS, QUANTITY 120 WITH NOT REFILL:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Criteria for use of opioids Page(s): 179.

**Decision rationale:** According to MTUS guidelines, ongoing use of opioids should follow specific rules: (a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed, and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy. (b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and

function. (c) Office: 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 non adherent) 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. Vicodin is a short acting opioid recommended for a short period of time in case of a breakthrough pain or in combination with long acting medications in case of chronic pain. There is no clear evidence of a breakthrough of back pain or acute lumbar root compression. Therefore, the request for Vicodin 5mg, every 6 hours, quantity 120 with not refill is not medically necessary.