

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0105627		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	07/30/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	05/11/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/07/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	06/04/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	07/08/2014

### 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 Occupational 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 48-year-old male with a 5/11/12 date of injury. At the time (6/5/14) of Decision for Norco 10/325mg, #60, and Butrans patch 25mg, # two, there is documentation of subjective (radiating low back pain) and objective (spasm of lumbar paraspinal muscles and positive Straight-leg- raise) findings, current diagnoses (lumbar disc injury, lumbar facet arthralgia, sacroiliac arthralgia, and S1 radiculopathy), and treatment to date (medications (including ongoing treatment with Butrans patches and Norco)). Regarding Norco, there is no documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects; and functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of Norco. Regarding Butrans patch, there is no documentation of opiate addiction or chronic pain (after detoxification in patients who have a history of opiate addiction).

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Norco 10/325mg, #60.:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines: Hydrocodone.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74-80. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: Title 8, California Code of Regulations, section 9792.20

**Decision rationale:** MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines necessitate documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects, as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of opioids. MTUS-Definitions identifies that any treatment intervention should not be continued in the absence of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of lumbar disc injury, lumbar facet arthralgia, sacroiliac arthralgia, and S1 radiculopathy. In addition, there is documentation of ongoing treatment with Norco. However, there is no documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. In addition, there is no documentation of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications as a result of Norco use to date. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Norco 10/325mg, #60 is not medically necessary.

**Butrans patch 25mg, #2:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines: Opiate Weaning.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Buprenorphine Page(s): 26-27.

**Decision rationale:** MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation of opiate addiction or chronic pain (after detoxification in patients who have a history of opiate addiction), as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of Buprenorphine. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of lumbar disc injury, lumbar facet arthralgia, sacroiliac arthralgia, and S1 radiculopathy. In addition, there is documentation of ongoing treatment with opioids (Norco). However, there is no documentation of opiate addiction or chronic pain (after detoxification in patients who have a history of opiate addiction). Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Butrans patch 25mg, # 2 is not medically necessary.