

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0042823		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	06/30/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	06/18/2004
<b>Decision Date:</b>	08/15/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	04/01/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	04/10/2014

### 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 Practice 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:

A 62 yr. old male claimant sustained a work injury on 6/18/04 involving the low back and hips. An MRI on 6/17/13 indicated the claimant had degenerative disk disease in the lumbar regions, disc bulging from L3 to L5, L5 radiculopathy and a herniated nucleus pulp process and T 12 to L1 and L1-L2. He underwent a lumbar fusion for the above findings. He had a diagnosis of intractable lumbar pain and lumbar radiculopathy. A progress note on 2/27/2014 indicated the claimant was taking Norco 5 mg tablets, Gabapentin, Aspirin, Naprosyn and Tizanidine for pain and muscle relaxation. The claimant had been on Norco for several months. A progress note on 3/11/14 indicated the claimant had seven (7) out of ten (10) pain level. He was using the previous medications and in addition to Lidoderm patches. Physical findings were notable for decreased range of motion of the lumbar spine and tenderness and spasms over the lumbar spine. The treating physician continued the Norco 5mg #90 as well as Lidoderm patches #60.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

#### **1 Prescription of Norco 5mg, #90: Upheld**

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

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids  
Page(s): 82-92.

**Decision rationale:** Norco is a short acting opioid used for breakthrough pain. According to the MTUS guidelines are not indicated at 1st line therapy for neuropathic pain, and chronic back pain . It is not indicated for mechanical or compressive etiologies. It is recommended for a trial basis for short-term use. Long Term-use has not been supported by any trials. In this case, the claimant has been on Norco for several months without significant improvement in pain. This had been used with anti-epileptics and muscle relaxants. The continued use of Norco is not medically necessary.

**1 Prescription of Lidoderm patches #60: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Lidoderm (Lidocaine patch).

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics Page(s): 111-112.

**Decision rationale:** According to the MTUS guidelines, topical analgesics are largely experimental in use with few randomized controlled trials to determine efficacy or safety. They are primarily recommended for neuropathic pain when trials of antidepressants and anticonvulsants have failed. Topical Lidocaine is recommended for localized peripheral pain after there has been evidence of a trial of first-line therapy (tri-cyclic or SNRI anti-depressants or an AED such as gabapentin or Lyrica). Lidoderm has been FDA approved for orphan status by the FDA for neuropathic pain. Lidoderm is also used off-label for diabetic neuropathy. Based on the above guidelines, and continued pain while taking Norco and Lidoderm, the continued use of Lidoderm is not indicated nor is it medically necessary.