

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0171272		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	10/23/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	08/22/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	02/28/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	10/07/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	10/16/2014

### 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. 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

### CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This 55 year-old patient sustained an injury on 8/22/12 while employed by [REDACTED]. The patient was running away from a pitbull when he fell on some glass on a front porch. Request(s) under consideration include Norco 10/325mg #60. Diagnoses include posttraumatic right radial sensory nerve laceration with repair on 8/29/12; myoligamentous sprain/strain of right elbow, left knee, cervical, thoracic and lumbar spine with DDD/ spinal stenosis. Conservative care has included medications, therapy modalities, and modified activities/rest. Medications list Norco and Flexeril. The patient continues to treat for chronic ongoing symptom complaints. Report of 9/15/14 from the provider noted continued constant neck pain rated at 8/10 radiating to upper extremities associated with numbness and tingling; headaches; right wrist and hand pain rated at 9/10 with n/t; constant low back pain rated at 7/10 radiating to lower extremities with n/t and spasm. Exam showed diffuse upper extremity weakness of 4/5 with decreased range by 50%. The request(s) for Norco 10/325mg #60 was non-certified on 10/7/14 citing guidelines criteria and lack of medical necessity.

### 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 Opioids.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids  
Page(s): 74-96.

**Decision rationale:** This 55 year-old patient sustained an injury on 8/22/12 while employed by [REDACTED]. The patient was running away from a pitbull when he fell on some glass on a front porch. Request(s) under consideration include Norco 10/325mg #60. Diagnoses include posttraumatic right radial sensory nerve laceration with repair on 8/29/12; myoligamentous sprain/strain of right elbow, left knee, cervical, thoracic and lumbar spine with DDD/ spinal stenosis. Conservative care has included medications, therapy modalities, and modified activities/rest. Medications list Norco and Flexeril. The patient continues to treat for chronic ongoing symptom complaints. Report of 9/15/14 from the provider noted continued constant neck pain rated at 8/10 radiating to upper extremities associated with numbness and tingling; headaches; right wrist and hand pain rated at 9/10 with n/t; constant low back pain rated at 7/10 radiating to lower extremities with n/t and spasm. Exam showed diffuse upper extremity weakness of 4/5 with decreased range by 50%. The request(s) for Norco 10/325mg #60 was non-certified on 10/7/14. Per the MTUS Guidelines cited, opioid use in the setting of chronic, non-malignant, or neuropathic pain is controversial. Patients on opioids should be routinely monitored for signs of impairment and use of opioids in patients with chronic pain should be reserved for those with improved functional outcomes attributable to their use, in the context of an overall approach to pain management that also includes non-opioid analgesics, adjuvant therapies, psychological support, and active treatments (e.g., exercise). Submitted documents show no evidence that the treating physician is prescribing opioids in accordance to change in pain relief, functional goals with demonstrated improvement in daily activities, decreased in medical utilization or change in functional status. There is no evidence presented of random drug testing or utilization of pain contract to adequately monitor for narcotic safety, efficacy, and compliance. The MTUS provides requirements of the treating physician to assess and document for functional improvement with treatment intervention and maintenance of function that would otherwise deteriorate if not supported. From the submitted reports, there is no demonstrated evidence of specific functional benefit derived from the continuing use of opioids with persistent severe pain for this chronic injury without acute flare, new injury, or progressive deterioration. The Norco 10/325mg #60 is not medically necessary and appropriate.