

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0194267		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	12/02/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/21/2001
<b>Decision Date:</b>	01/23/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	10/24/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	11/20/2014

### 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 Preventive Medicine, and is licensed to practice in Indiana. 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:

This employee is a 63 year old female with date of injury of 4/21/2001. A review of the medical records indicates that the patient is undergoing treatment for left shoulder pain, right shoulder impingement tendinopathy, and cervical strain and sprain. Subjective complaints include worsening pain in her left shoulder and neck; trouble raising arm about shoulder height. Objective findings include left shoulder had limited range and positive impingement sign; neck is limited in all planes with tenderness to palpation of the paravertebrals. Treatment has included Celebrex and Norco. The utilization review dated 10/24/2014 partially-certified Norco 7.5/325 #60.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Norco 7.5/325 #60:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74-96. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Neck and Upper Back (Acute and Chronic), Low Back - Lumbar & Thoracic (Acute & Chronic), Shoulder, Pain, Opioids

**Decision rationale:** ODG does not recommend the use of opioids for neck, low back, and shoulder pain "except for short use for severe cases, not to exceed 2 weeks." The patient has exceeded the 2 week recommended treatment length for opioid usage. MTUS does not discourage use of opioids past 2 weeks, but does state that "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." The treating physician does not fully document the least reported pain over the period since last assessment, intensity of pain after taking opioid, pain relief, increased level of function, or improved quality of life. Additionally, medical documents indicate that the patient has been on Norco in excess of the recommended 2-week limit. The QME also recommended weaning of narcotic as did the utilization review. As such, the request for Norco #60 is not medically necessary.