

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0144225		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	08/05/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	10/29/2009
<b>Decision Date:</b>	08/31/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	06/30/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	07/24/2015

### 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:

The injured worker is a 42-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 10-29-2009. On primary treating physician report dated 05-29-2015 there was limited information documented, no complaints or examination was noted. The diagnoses have included stenosis cervical, spondylolisthesis, degenerative disc lumbar, spinal stenosis lumbar, displacement of disc, sciatica, sprain-strain lumbar, and sprain-strain neck. Treatment to date has included medication. There was no clear evidence of any significant reduction in pain level or improvement in functional capacity noted. The provider requested Norco.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Norco 10/325mg #120:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids for chronic pain, Acetaminophen.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, page 74-96.

**Decision rationale:** The MTUS Guidelines cite opioid use in the setting of 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 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 results 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 injury without acute flare, new injury, or progressive deterioration. The Norco 10/325mg #120 is not medically necessary and appropriate.