

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0147549		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	08/10/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/30/2015
<b>Decision Date:</b>	09/04/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	07/17/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	07/29/2015

### 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: Maryland

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Neuromuscular Medicine

### 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 41-year-old female who sustained an industrial injury on April 30, 2015 resulting in radiating low back pain. She was diagnosed with herniated nucleus pulposus of the lumbar spine with right-sided radiculopathy. Documented treatment has included epidural steroid injection, physical therapy and chiropractic treatments without results, and medication. The injured worker continues to present with radiating low back pain. The treating physician's plan of care includes Norco 10-325 mg. She is on work restrictions but not working at present.

### 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, specific drug list; Opioids, criteria for use. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Pain - Opioids, short course.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Ongoing management Page(s): 78-80.

**Decision rationale:** Norco 10/325mg, #60 is not medically necessary per the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines. The MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that a 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 MTUS does not support ongoing opioid use without improvement in function or pain. The MTUS supports clear monitoring of the "4 A's" (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug taking behaviors). The documentation does not reveal objective urine toxicology screening. The 6/24/15 document reveals that the patient ran out of medications early. The documentation reveals that the patient has been on long term opioids without significant objective increase in functional on Norco therefore the request for continued Norco is not medically necessary.