

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0163950		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/01/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/27/2006
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/05/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	08/14/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	08/20/2015

### 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: Texas, Illinois

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational 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 69 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 4-27-2006. She reports pain in both knees and bilateral shoulders and has been diagnosed with chronic left knee pain, chronic right knee pain due to meniscal tear with tricompartmental chondromalacia, chronic right shoulder pain with impingement syndrome, and left shoulder pain. Treatment has included medications. There was tenderness of the right knee. There was tenderness and swelling of the left knee with crepitus. There was left shoulder rotator cuff tenderness with left shoulder crepitus. There was right shoulder rotator cuff tenderness. The treatment plan included Norco. The treatment request included Norco 5-325 #120.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Norco 5/325mg, 1 by mouth every 6 hours, #120 with no refills:** 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): 78-88.

**Decision rationale:** The injured worker sustained a work related injury on 4-27-2006. She has been diagnosed with chronic left knee pain, chronic right knee pain due to meniscal tear with tricompartmental chondromalacia, chronic right shoulder pain with impingement syndrome, and left shoulder pain. Treatment has included medications. The medical records provided for review do not indicate a medical necessity for Norco 5/325mg, 1 by mouth every 6 hours, #120 with no refills. Therefore, this request is not medically necessary. The MTUS recommends the use of the lowest dose of opioids for the short-term treatment of moderate to severe pain. However; the MTUS does not recommend the use of opioids if there are reasonable alternatives. The MTUS does not recommend the long-term use of opioids for the treatment of chronic pain due to worsening adverse effects and lack of research in support of benefit. Also, the MTUS recommends that individuals on opioid maintenance treatment be monitored for analgesia (pain control), activities of daily living, adverse effects and aberrant behavior. The MTUS recommends discontinuation of opioid treatment if there is no documented evidence of overall improvement or if there is evidence of illegal activity or drug abuse or adverse effect with the opioid medication. The medical records indicate failed treatment with Amitriptyline, an antidepressant, therefore she was prescribed with Lidoderm; however, medical records do not indicate there have been failed attempts at the use of alternatives to treatment, like NSAIDs and acetaminophen. The records stated she tried OTC use of these medications; but this was only mentioned at the time Norco was being prescribed.