

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0168647		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/09/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	03/02/2011
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/13/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	08/20/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	08/26/2015

### 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: North Carolina  
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

### 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 injured worker is a 57-year-old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 03-02-2011. The injured worker was diagnosed as having pain in joint lower leg, foot pain, cervical pain, cervical facet syndrome, shoulder pain, spinal-lumbar degenerative disc disease, disc disorder cervical, low back pain, lumbar facet syndrome and radiculopathy. On medical records dated 03-17-2015, 04-27-2015 and 07-28-2015 the subjective findings noted pain along the neck with radiation into the left arm and lower back with radiation into both legs. Pain level was noted 7 out of 10 without medication. Physical findings were noted as having a slow to normal gait; cervical spine was noted to have a restricted range of motion. Lumbar spine paravertebral muscle revealed spasm and tenderness on both sides. Straight leg test was positive. The injured worker was noted temporary totally disabled. Treatments to date included medication and urine drug screen. Current medication included Docusate Sodium, Opana ER, Percocet, Neurontin, Senna, Trazadone and Cyclobenzaprine. Medical records indicated that the injured worker had been taking Percocet and Neurontin since at least 06-2013. The Utilization Review (UR) dated 08-20-2015, was noted to have a Request for Authorization dated 08-13-2015. The UR submitted for this medical review indicted that the request for Neurontin 800mg #60 was modified and the request for Percocet 10-325mg #180 was non-certified.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Neurontin 800mg #120:** Overturned

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Antiepilepsy Drugs (AEDs) Page(s): 16-17.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines gabapentin Page(s): 18.

**Decision rationale:** The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on Neurontin states: Gabapentin (Neurontin, Gabarone, generic available) has been shown to be effective for treatment of diabetic painful neuropathy and postherpetic neuralgia and has been considered as a first-line treatment for neuropathic pain. This RCT concluded that gabapentin monotherapy appears to be efficacious for the treatment of pain and sleep interference associated with diabetic peripheral neuropathy and exhibits positive effects on mood and quality of life. It has been given FDA approval for treatment of post-herpetic neuralgia. The number needed to treat (NNT) for overall neuropathic pain is 4. It has a more favorable side-effect profile than Carbamazepine, with a number needed to harm of 2.5. Gabapentin in combination with morphine has been studied for treatment of diabetic neuropathy and postherpetic neuralgia. When used in combination the maximum tolerated dosage of both drugs was lower than when each was used as a single agent and better analgesia occurred at lower doses of each. Recommendations involving combination therapy require further study. The patient has the diagnosis of neuropathic pain in the form of radiculopathy. Therefore, the request is necessary and approved.

**Percocet 10/325mg #180:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 78-81, 86, 81.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines opioids Page(s): 76-84.

**Decision rationale:** The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on opioids states for ongoing management: On-Going Management. Actions Should Include: (a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed, and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy. (b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. (c) Office: 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. Information from family members or other caregivers should be considered in determining the patient's response to treatment. The 4 A's for Ongoing Monitoring: Four domains have been proposed as most relevant for ongoing monitoring of chronic pain patients on opioids: pain relief, side effects, physical and psychosocial functioning, and the occurrence of any potentially aberrant (or nonadherent) drug-related behaviors. These domains

have been summarized as the "4 A's" (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug taking behaviors). The monitoring of these outcomes over time should affect therapeutic decisions and provide a framework for documentation of the clinical use of these controlled drugs. (d) Home: To aid in pain and functioning assessment, the patient should be requested to keep a pain diary that includes entries such as pain triggers, and incidence of end-of-dose pain. It should be emphasized that using this diary will help in tailoring the opioid dose. This should not be a requirement for pain management. (e) Use of drug screening or inpatient treatment with issues of abuse, addiction, or poor pain control. (f) Documentation of misuse of medications (doctor-shopping, uncontrolled drug escalation, drug diversion). (g) Continuing review of overall situation with regard to nonopioid means of pain control. (h) Consideration of a consultation with a multidisciplinary pain clinic if doses of opioids are required beyond what is usually required for the condition or pain does not improve on opioids in 3 months. Consider a psych consult if there is evidence of depression, anxiety or irritability. Consider an addiction medicine consult if there is evidence of substance misuse. When to Continue Opioids (a) If the patient has returned to work; (b) If the patient has improved functioning and pain. The long-term use of this medication class is not recommended per the California MTUS unless there documented evidence of benefit with measurable outcome measures and improvement in function. There is no documented significant improvement in VAS scores for significant periods of time. There are no objective measurements of improvement in function. Therefore all criteria for the ongoing use of opioids have not been met and the request is not medically necessary.