

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0193035		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	10/07/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	12/02/2013
<b>Decision Date:</b>	11/19/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	09/17/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	10/01/2015

### 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: Massachusetts

Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, Pain Management

### 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 59 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on December 2, 2013. She reported immediate pain in her neck and arms. The injured worker was currently diagnosed as having shoulder impingement syndrome right, cervical radiculopathy right, herniated disc right C5, C6, occipital neuralgia, myofascial pain syndrome, lumbar radiculopathy right and sacroiliac joint dysfunction. Treatment to date has included diagnostic studies, surgery, sling, physical therapy and medication. On September 10, 2015, the injured worker complained of neck pain radiating in the right upper extremity along with numbness and tingling in the left hand. The pain was rated as an 8-10 on a 1-10 pain scale. Physical examination of the cervical spine revealed severe tenderness over the right cervical area more on the C5-6 level. Range of motion was limited. There was severe right occipital tenderness causing pain radiating into the right occipital area. Physical examination of the lumbar-sacral area revealed severe tenderness over the right facet joint. Straight leg raising test was positive on the right side at 50 degrees. The treatment plan included continuation of physical therapy, Norco and Duexis. On September 17, 2015, utilization review denied a request for Duexis 800-26.6mg #90 with two refills. A request for Norco 10-325mg #60 was authorized.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Duexis 800-26.6mg #90 with 2 refills: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): NSAIDs, GI symptoms & cardiovascular risk, NSAIDs, hypertension and renal function, NSAIDs, specific drug list & adverse effects.

**Decision rationale:** According to the MTUS Anti-inflammatories is the traditional first line of treatment, to reduce pain so activity and functional restoration can resume, but long-term use may not be warranted. (Van Tulder-Cochrane, 2000) Recommended with cautions below. Disease-State Warnings for all NSAIDs: All NSAIDS have [U.S. Boxed Warning]: for associated risk of adverse cardiovascular events, including, MI, stroke, and new onset or worsening of pre-existing hypertension. NSAIDS should never be used right before or after a heart surgery (CABG - coronary artery bypass graft). NSAIDs can cause ulcers and bleeding in the stomach and intestines at any time during treatment (FDA Medication Guide). See NSAIDs, GI Symptoms and Cardiovascular Risks. Other disease-related concerns (non-boxed warnings): Hepatic: Use with caution in injured workers with moderate hepatic impairment and not recommended for injured workers with severe hepatic impairment. Borderline elevations of one or more liver enzymes may occur in up to 15% of injured workers taking NSAIDs. Renal: Use of NSAIDs may compromise renal function. FDA Medication Guide is provided by FDA mandate on all prescriptions dispensed for NSAIDS. Routine Suggested Monitoring: Package inserts for NSAIDs recommend periodic lab monitoring of a CBC and chemistry profile (including liver and renal function tests). There has been a recommendation to measure liver transaminases within 4 to 8 weeks after starting therapy, but the interval of repeating lab tests after this treatment duration has not been established. Routine blood pressure monitoring is recommended. Overall Dosing Recommendation: It is generally recommended that the lowest effective dose be used for all NSAIDs for the shortest duration of time consistent with the individual injured worker treatment goals. According to the documents available for review, it appears that the injured worker is taking this medication for long-term therapy of a chronic condition. Given the increased risks associated with long-term use of this medication and no documented evidence that the lowest possible dose is being used for the shortest period of time, the requirements for treatment have not been met and is not medically necessary.