

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0204853		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	10/21/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	02/10/2014
<b>Decision Date:</b>	12/03/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	10/09/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	10/19/2015

### 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, Oregon, Washington  
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Orthopedic Surgery

### 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 medical report dated 09-30-2015 indicates that the injured worker complained of low back pain, back stiffness, neck pain, dizziness, and difficulty sleeping. The injured worker's current pain level was rated 7 out of 10. The low back pain radiated to the right buttock. It was noted that the injured worker had an opioid side effect of constipation. The physical examination showed diffuse decreased range of motion; tenderness of the right sacroiliac; decreased cervical range of motion; moderate tenderness of the right lumbar paravertebral muscles; and decreased lumbar extension and flexion. The diagnostic studies to date have included x-rays of the lumbosacral spine on 10-09-2014 which showed degenerative changes throughout the lumbosacral spine; and an MRI of the lumbar spine on 03-16-2015 which showed levoconvex scoliosis of the lumbar spine, mild to moderate central canal stenosis with lateral recess narrowing and neural foraminal stenosis at L2-3, left paracentral and subarticular zone disc extrusion with superimposed broad-based disc bulge at L3-4, and central disc extrusion and overall borderline lateral recess stenosis and prominent severe neural foraminal stenosis at L4-5. Treatments and evaluation to date have included Hydrocodone-Acetaminophen, Oxycodone HCL (since at least 12-2014), and physical therapy. The request for authorization was dated 09-30-2015. The treating physician requested Oxycodone-Acetaminophen 10-325mg #100. On 10-09-2015, Utilization Review (UR) non-certified the request for Oxycodone-Acetaminophen 10-325mg #100.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Oxycodone/Acetaminophen 10/325mg #100: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Opioids, criteria for use, Opioids for chronic pain.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Opioids, criteria for use, Opioids, specific drug list. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain / Opioids for chronic pain.

**Decision rationale:** According to the CA MTUS/Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, opioids (criteria for use & specific drug list): A therapeutic trial of opioids should not be employed until the patient has failed a trial of non-opioid analgesics. The patient should have at least one physical and psychosocial assessment by the treating doctor (and a possible second opinion by a specialist) to assess whether a trial of opioids should occur. Before initiating therapy, the patient should set goals, and the continued use of opioids should be contingent on meeting these goals. Guidelines recommend 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. The 4 A's for Ongoing Monitoring include analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug- taking behaviors. Opioids may be continued if the patient has returned to work and the patient has improved function/pain. The ODG-TWC pain section comments specifically on criteria for the use of drug screening for ongoing opioid treatment. The ODG Pain/Opioids for chronic pain states "According to a major NIH systematic review, there is insufficient evidence to support the effectiveness of long-term opioid therapy for improving chronic pain, but emerging data support a dose-dependent risk for serious harms." Based upon the records reviewed there is insufficient evidence to support chronic use of narcotics. There is lack of demonstrated functional improvement, percentage of relief, demonstration of urine toxicology compliance, return to work, or increase in activity from the exam note of 9/30/15. Therefore, the determination is for non-certification.