

Case Number:	CM15-0030197		
Date Assigned:	02/23/2015	Date of Injury:	11/25/2008
Decision Date:	04/03/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/19/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/18/2015

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: New Jersey

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:

The injured worker is a 60 year old male who sustained a work related injury on November 25, 2008, with injuries that resulted in lower limb pain and debilitation. He was diagnosed with Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy, neuritic pain at the dorsal aspect of the right foot and chronic pain in the plantar heel and heel pad and plantar fasciitis. Treatment included pain medications, physical therapy and a spinal stimulator. He underwent a dorsal column stimulator right foot and ankle. Currently, the injured worker complained of ongoing lower limb and feet pain. On January 19, 2015, a request for one prescription of Norco 10/325 mg #90 was modified to one prescription of Norco 10/325 #60 by Utilization Review, noting California Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 10/325mg #90: 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): 78-96.

Decision rationale: The MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that opioids may be considered for moderate to severe chronic pain as a secondary treatment, but require that for continued opioid use, there is to be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use with implementation of a signed opioid contract, drug screening (when appropriate), review of non-opioid means of pain control, using the lowest possible dose, making sure prescriptions are from a single practitioner and pharmacy, and side effects, as well as consultation with pain specialist if after 3 months unsuccessful with opioid use, all in order to improve function as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of opioids. Long-term use and continuation of opioids requires this comprehensive review with documentation to justify continuation. In the case of this worker, there was insufficient evidence provided that this complete review was completed at the time of this request. Although vague statements in the progress notes provided suggested the provider trying to reduce his Norco over time and the worker being interested in better pain control than the Norco was providing, there was no measurable functional gains reported from the Norco that was being used. Therefore, the Norco will be considered medically unnecessary. Continued weaning is recommended.