

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0053107		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	03/26/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	12/28/2004
<b>Decision Date:</b>	05/01/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	03/10/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	03/20/2015

### 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 51 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury 12/28/2004 he reported low back pain due to attempting to hold an extension ladder that fell. On provider visit dated 03/10/2015 the injured worker has reported back pain. On examination he was noted to have bilateral tenderness and spasms of the lumbar paraspinal muscles and a lumbar area was noted to have a decreased range of motion. The injured worker was noted to walk with a limp. The diagnoses have included lumbar radiculopathy and lumbar disc disease. Treatment to date has included MRI, injections, physical therapy, laboratory studies and medications. The provider requested a continuation of pain medication Norco.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Norco 5/325 mg, sixty count:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids - Criteria for Use Section.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 78-81.

**Decision rationale:** The injured worker sustained a work related injury on 12/28/2004. The medical records provided indicate the diagnosis of lumbar radiculopathy and lumbar disc disease. Treatments have included physical therapy and medications. The medical records provided for review do not indicate a medical necessity for Norco 5/325 mg, sixty count . The MTUS recommends the use of the lowest dose of opioids for the short term treatment of moderate to severe pain. The MTUS does not recommend the use of opioids for longer than 70 days in 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 records indicate there has been no overall improvement despite the long term use of the medication, dating back to about 2007. Therefore, the request for Norco 5/325 mg sixty-count is not medically necessary.