

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0058318		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	04/03/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	08/20/2011
<b>Decision Date:</b>	05/04/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	03/24/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	03/27/2015

### 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:

The injured worker is 46 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 8/20/11. The actual injury is described but initial complaints are not described. The injured worker was diagnosed as having thoracic or lumbosacral neuritis or radiculitis NOS; lumbar spinal stenosis; lumbar region sprains/strains; lumbago. Treatment to date has included physical therapy, home exercise program, chiropractic therapy; acupuncture; lumbar epidural steroid injections (8/12/13); x-rays lumbar spine (2/19/13); ;lumbar epidural steroid injection (6/12/13); MRI lumbar spine (7/16/14); L5-S1 anterior-posterior decompression and fusion (3/9 and 10, 2015); drug screening for medical management; medications. Currently, the PR-2 notes dated 2/24/15; the injured worker was in for a follow-up appointment and complained of low back pain that radiated to the bilateral thighs, legs and feet. The pain is described as moderate to severe with aching, burning, sharp and throbbing. The PR-2 notes dated 3/24/15; the injured worker has continued complaints of weakness and soreness I the legs with some facial twitching. The injured worker is a status post L5-S1 anterior-posterior decompression and fusion on 3/9-10, 2015. The provider is requesting the medications Lunesta 1mg, per 03/13/15 order quantity 30 for insomnia and Hydrocodone-acetaminophen (Norco) 10/325mg, per 03/13/15 60 for pain level.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Lunesta 1mg, per 03/13/15 order quantity: 30.00: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain Chapter.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG, insomnia.

**Decision rationale:** The California MTUS and the ACOEM do not specifically address this medication. Per the official disability guidelines recommend pharmacological agents for insomnia only is used after careful evaluation of potential causes of sleep disturbance. Primary insomnia is usually addressed pharmacologically. Secondary insomnia may be treated with pharmacological and/or psychological measures. Pharmacological treatment consists of four main categories: Benzodiazepines, Non-benzodiazepines, Melatonin and melatonin receptor agonists and over the counter medications. Sedating antidepressants have also been used to treat insomnia however there is less evidence to support their use for insomnia, but they may be an option in patients with coexisting depression. The patient does not have the diagnosis of primary insomnia. There is also no documentation of first line insomnia treatment options such as sleep hygiene measures. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.

**Hydrocodone-acetaminophen (Norco) 10/325mg, per 03/13/15 order quantity: 60.00: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines opioids Page(s): 78-80, 91, 124.

**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. (Passik, 2000)

(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 (Washington, 2002) (Colorado, 2002) (Ontario, 2000) (VA/DoD, 2003) (Maddox-AAPM/APS, 1997) (Wisconsin, 2004) (Warfield, 2004)

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 improvement in VAS scores. There are also no objective measurements of improvement in function. Therefore, criteria for the ongoing use of opioids have not been met and the request is not medically necessary.