

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0080705		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	05/01/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	02/03/2011
<b>Decision Date:</b>	06/01/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	03/31/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	04/27/2015

### 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: Massachusetts

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, 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:

This 56-year-old male sustained an industrial injury on 2/3/11. He subsequently reported right lower quadrant pain. Diagnoses include abdominal pain right lower quadrant, hypertension secondary to pain, inguinal hernia and neuroma. Treatments to date include surgery, therapy and prescription medications. The injured worker continues to experience right groin pain. Upon examination, tenderness was noted with light palpation, no guarding and no rigidity, Valsalva maneuver increases right groin pain. A request for Norco and Lyrica medications was made by the treating physician.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Lyrica 50mg #90 x 4:** Overturned

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Anti-epilepsy drugs (AEDs).

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines (1) Antiepilepsy drugs (AEDs), p18-19 (2) Medications for chronic pain, p60 Page(s): 18-19, 60.

**Decision rationale:** The claimant is more than 4 years status post work-related injury and continues to be treated for chronic abdominal pain after undergoing a hernia repair. He has a diagnosis of an inguinal neuroma. The requesting provider documents medications as decreasing pain from 9/120 to 2/10. Norco is being prescribed at a total MED (morphine equivalent dose) of up to 10 mg per day. The claimant is able to continue working. Antiepilepsy drugs such as Lyrica are recommended for neuropathic pain. This c has neuropathic pain due to a neuroma. Initial dosing of Lyrica is 50 mg three times per day with a maximum dose of up to 600 mg per day. In this case, the requested dosing is consistent with guidelines recommendations and therefore medically necessary.

**Norco 10/325mg #16:** Overturned

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines (1) Opioids, criteria for use, p76-80 (2) Opioids, dosing, p86 Page(s): 76-80, 86.

**Decision rationale:** The claimant is more than 4 years status post work-related injury and continues to be treated for chronic abdominal pain after undergoing a hernia repair. He has a diagnosis of an inguinal neuroma. The requesting provider documents medications as decreasing pain from 9/120 to 2/10. Norco is being prescribed at a total MED (morphine equivalent dose) of up to 10 mg per day. The claimant is able to continue working. Norco (hydrocodone/acetaminophen) is a short acting combination opioid often used for intermittent or breakthrough pain. In this case, it is being prescribed as part of the claimant's ongoing management. There are no identified issues of abuse or addiction and the claimant's medications are providing pain relief. The total MED is less than 120 mg per day which is within guideline recommendations. Therefore, the continued prescribing of Norco was medically necessary.