

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0160241		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	10/06/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	10/11/2006
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/31/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	09/02/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	09/29/2014

### 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. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Osteopathic Family Practice and is licensed to practice in California. 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

### 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 patient is a 51 year old retired male with a date of injury on 10/1/2006. He is followed for the following diagnoses: cervicogenic disc disease, cervical osteophytes, cervical neural foraminal stenosis, lumbar disc disease, lumbar disc herniation, right shoulder rotator cuff tear and status post repair, and right shoulder tendinosis. The patient was evaluated on 7/28/14 at which time he complained of 5-6/10 neck, lower back and right shoulder pain. The patient is currently taking Norco and Soma. Cervical spine examination revealed decreased ROM, tenderness, positive Spurling's on the right, and positive compression. Upper and lower extremity sensation, strength and deep tendon reflexes were normal. Lumbar examination revealed tenderness, decreased range of motion, and bilateral positive Kemp's test. Right shoulder examination revealed decreased range of motion, painful arc over 135 degrees and decreased strength at 4/5 with flexion and abduction. Treatment plan consisted of Diclofenac 3 %/Lidocaine 5 % cream in an attempt to wean Norco and Soma. Norco 10/325 mg #120 and Soma 350 mg #120 was prescribed. UR was performed on 9/2/14 at which time recommendation was made to non-certify Diclofenac/Lidocaine cream. Recommendation was made on modify to allow Norco #78 and Soma #20 for weaning purposes.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Diclofenac / Lidocaine 3%/5% 180mg: Upheld**

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

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics Page(s): 110-112.

**Decision rationale:** The request for topical Diclofenac / Lidocaine 3%/5% 180mg is not medically necessary. The CA MTUS guidelines state that topical medications are largely experimental in use with few randomized controlled trials to determine efficacy or safety. The guidelines also specifically state that any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended. Diclofenac is only supported in the 1% formulation. With regards to Lidocaine, topical Lidocaine is only FDA approved in the formulation of a dermal patch. Furthermore, in February 2007 the FDA notified consumers and healthcare professionals of the potential hazards of the use of topical lidocaine. Those at particular risk were individuals that applied large amounts of this substance over large areas, left the products on for long periods of time, or used the agent with occlusive dressings. For these reasons, the request for Diclofenac / Lidocaine 3%/5% 180mg is not medically necessary.

**Norco 10/325mg #120:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, criteria for use.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74-96.

**Decision rationale:** The request for Norco is not supported. The medical records indicate that the patient has been on opioids for an extended period of time. Evidence based guidelines do not support chronic use of opioids for non-malignant pain. Chronic use of opioids lead to dependence, tolerance and hormonal imbalance in men. However, given that the patient has been on opioids for an extended period of time, this medication should be weaned. The medical records indicate that a modification has been rendered to allow for weaning of Norco. As such, the request for Norco 10/325mg #120 is not medically necessary.

**Soma 350mg #120:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Carisoprodol (Soma).

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle Relaxants Carisoprodol Page(s): 63-66, 29.

**Decision rationale:** The CA MUTS guidelines do not recommend muscle relaxants for chronic use. Specifically, Soma is not recommended. References state that abuse has been noted for sedative and relaxant effects. In regular abusers the main concern is the accumulation of meprobamate. Carisoprodol abuse has also been noted in order to augment or alter effects of

other drugs. This includes as a combination with hydrocodone, an effect that some abusers claim is similar to heroin (referred to as a "Las Vegas Cocktail"). Furthermore, references state that there was a 300% increase in numbers of emergency room episodes related to carisoprodol from 1994 to 2005. Given that the patient has been on this medication for an extended period of time, this medication should be weaned slowly. The medical records indicate that modification has been rendered on UR to allow for weaning of Soma. As such, the request for Soma 350mg #120 is not medically necessary.