

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0168848		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	10/16/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	02/17/2014
<b>Decision Date:</b>	11/18/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	09/23/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	10/13/2014

### 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 Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, has a subspecialty in Pain Medicine 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:

This is a patient with a date of injury of 2/17/14. A utilization review determination dated 9/23/14 recommends non-certification of Norco and Flexeril. 9/8/14 medical report identifies low back pain "getting slightly better but continues to bother him and without medications pain is getting worst. Patient states the medication does help him deal with his pain." On exam, there is tenderness and limited range of motion (ROM). Recommendations include naproxen, Norco, and Flexeril.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Norco 5/325mg take one two times a day #60 - prescribed 9/8/14: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids; regarding : Hydrocodone/Acetaminophen (Norco)/ When to Co.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 44, 47, 75-79, 120.

**Decision rationale:** Regarding the request for Norco, California Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines note that it is an opiate pain medication. Due to high abuse potential, close follow-up is recommended with documentation of analgesic effect, objective functional improvement, side effects, and discussion regarding any aberrant use. Guidelines go on to recommend discontinuing

opioids if there is no documentation of improved function and pain. Within the documentation available for review, there is no indication that the medication is improving the patient's function or pain (in terms of specific examples of functional improvement and percent reduction in pain or reduced NRS), no documentation regarding side effects, and no discussion regarding aberrant use. As such, there is no clear indication for ongoing use of the medication. In light of the above issues, the currently requested Norco is not medically necessary.

**Flexeril 10mg, take one two times a day #60 - prescribed 9/8/14: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Antispasmodics & Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril, Amrix, Fexmid, generi.

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

**Decision rationale:** Regarding the request for Flexeril, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines support the use of non-sedating muscle relaxants to be used with caution as a 2nd line option for the short-term treatment of acute exacerbations of pain. Within the documentation available for review, there is no identification of a specific analgesic benefit or objective functional improvement as a result of the medication. Additionally, it does not appear that this medication is being prescribed for the short-term treatment of an acute exacerbation, as recommended by guidelines. In the absence of such documentation, the currently requested Flexeril is not medically necessary.