

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0096516		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/15/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	05/30/2008
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/15/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	06/11/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	06/24/2014

### 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 Anesthesiology, has a subspecialty in Pain Management and is licensed to practice in Tennessee. 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 38-year-old female with a 5/30/08 date of injury. The patient was working as a cherry picker, and while working on a high ladder, the ladder fell. According to a progress report dated 5/13/14, the patient stated that she had noticed small improvement in her back pain. Tramadol and Lyrica helped her pain and brought her pain level down from a 10 to a 6-7. She had pain at the top of her head, neck, shoulders, elbows, lower back, around the ankles and the front of the shins. She stated that her activities of daily living without medications were a little bit less, by about 50 percent. She stated that she doesn't take much medication. She is afraid of side effects and has almost a full bottle of Norco. Objective findings: right trapezius tightness to palpation, tenderness around the AC joint and supraspinatus area, muscle spasms to inspection of back, tenderness of low back, pain in back of right calf. Diagnostic impression: status post fall injury, local trauma, myofascial pain syndrome, low back pain, right shoulder status post rotator cuff stretch injury. Treatment to date: medication management, activity modification, acupuncture, physical therapy. A UR decision dated 6/11/14 modified the request for Norco 5/325 #50 with 1 refill to Norco 5/325mg #50 with zero refills. The patient has been prescribed this medication for acute flare-ups of pain and as per the 5/13/14 progressed report, this medication is not used daily. The patient is afraid of medication side effects and has almost a full bottle of Norco. However, there is documentation of significant functional benefit from the use of current medications.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Norco 5/325mg, #50, with 1 refill:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids for chronic pain and long-term assessment..

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines 9792.24.2 Page(s): 78-81.

**Decision rationale:** CA MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines do not support ongoing opioid treatment unless prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; are prescribed at the lowest possible dose; and unless there is ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. According to the report dated 5/13/14, it is noted that the patient's function and activities of daily living are improved. However, it is documented that the patient still has almost a full bottle of Norco. She only take it up to 2 to 3 times a day for acute flare and not daily. There was no rationale provided as to why the patient requires additional medication at this time when it is noted that she still has almost a full bottle of Norco. Therefore, the request for Norco 5/325mg, #50, with 1 refill was not medically necessary.