

Case Number:	CM14-0092400		
Date Assigned:	07/25/2014	Date of Injury:	07/16/2006
Decision Date:	04/17/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/12/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/18/2014

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. 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: Maryland, Texas, Virginia

Certification(s)/Specialty: Internal Medicine, Allergy and Immunology, Rheumatology

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 a 60-year-old male who sustained an industrial injury on 07/16/08. He reports severe pain in his right knee, low back, and numbness in his bilateral feet. Diagnoses include status post left knee arthroscopy and pin in the joint lower leg. Treatments to date include right knee cortisone injection, medications, and Functional Restoration Program evaluation. In a progress note dated 03/12/14, the last dated for which notes were available for review, the treating provider recommends physical therapy, ongoing psychiatric medication management visits, and continued treatment with gabapentin, and omeprazole. On 06/12/14 Utilization Review non-certified Norco, citing MTUS guidelines.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 10/325mg # 75: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, Criteria for use Page(s): 80.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74-96. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG)

Neck and Upper Back (Acute & Chronic), Low Back-Lumbar & Thoracic (Acute & Chronic), Shoulder, Pain, opioids.

Decision rationale: ODG does not recommend the use of opioids for neck, low back, and shoulder pain "except for short use for severe cases, not to exceed 2 weeks." The patient has exceeded the 2 week recommended treatment length for opioid usage. MTUS does not discourage use of opioids past 2 weeks, but does state that "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." The treating physician does not fully document the least reported pain over the period since last assessment, intensity of pain after taking opioid, pain relief, increased level of function, or improved quality of life. Additionally, medical documents indicate that the patient has been on Norco in excess of the recommended 2-week limit. As such, the request for Norco 10/325mg #75 is not medically necessary.