

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0127360		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	07/14/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	11/06/2008
<b>Decision Date:</b>	08/07/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	06/15/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	07/01/2015

### 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: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

### 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 46 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 11/6/08. The injured worker has complaints of neck pain radiating to upper shoulder. The documentation noted the injured worker has decreased cervical spine range of motion. The diagnoses have included cervical spondylosis without myelopathy. Treatment to date has included norco; flexeril; anti-inflammatory; physical therapy; chiropractic treatments; home exercise program and injections. Several documents within the submitted medical records are difficult to decipher. The patient continues to treat for chronic pain symptoms. The requests were for norco 10/325mg 1 tablet by mouth twice a day quantity 60; flexeril 10mg 1 tablet by mouth twice a day quantity 60 and prilosec 40mg one tablet by mouth quantity 30.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Norco 10/325mg 1 tablet by mouth twice a day quantity 60:** Upheld

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

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, page 74-96.

**Decision rationale:** MTUS Guidelines cite opioid use in the setting of chronic, non-malignant, or neuropathic pain is controversial. Patients on opioids should be routinely monitored for signs of impairment and use of opioids in patients with chronic pain should be reserved for those with improved functional outcomes attributable to their use, in the context of an overall approach to pain management that also includes non-opioid analgesics, adjuvant therapies, psychological support, and active treatments (e.g., exercise). Submitted documents show no evidence that the treating physician is prescribing opioids in accordance to change in pain relief, functional goals with demonstrated improvement in daily activities, decreased in medical utilization or change in functional status. There is no evidence presented of random drug testing results or utilization of pain contract to adequately monitor for narcotic safety, efficacy, and compliance. The MTUS provides requirements of the treating physician to assess and document for functional improvement with treatment intervention and maintenance of function that would otherwise deteriorate if not supported. From the submitted reports, there is no demonstrated evidence of specific functional benefit derived from the continuing use of opioids with persistent severe pain for this chronic injury of 2008 without acute flare, new injury, or progressive deterioration. The Norco 10/325mg 1 tablet by mouth twice a day quantity 60 is not medically necessary and appropriate.

**Flexeril 10mg 1 tablet by mouth twice a day quantity 60:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle Relaxants (for pain).

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle relaxants, pg 128.

**Decision rationale:** Guidelines do not recommend long-term use of this muscle relaxant for this chronic injury of 2008. Additionally, the efficacy in clinical trials has been inconsistent and most studies are small and of short duration. These medications may be useful for chronic musculoskeletal pain, but there are no long-term studies of their effectiveness or safety. Submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication or medical need for this treatment and there is no report of significant progressive deteriorating clinical findings, acute flare-up or new injury to support for its long-term use. There is no report of functional improvement resulting from its previous treatment to support further use as the patient remains unchanged. The Flexeril 10mg 1 tablet by mouth twice a day quantity 60 is not medically necessary and appropriate.

**Prilosec 40mg one tablet by mouth quantity 30:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Non Steroidal Anti Inflammatory Drugs.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines NSAIDs, GI Symptoms and Cardiovascular risk, Pages 68-69.

**Decision rationale:** Proton pump inhibitor (PPI) medication is for treatment of the problems associated with active gastric ulcers, erosive esophagitis, Barrett's esophagitis, or in patients with pathologic hypersecretion diseases. Although preventive treatment is effective for the mentioned diagnosis, studies suggest; however, nearly half of PPI prescriptions are used for unapproved or no indications. Per MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines, the patient does not meet criteria for Omeprazole (Prilosec) namely reserved for patients with history of prior GI bleeding, the elderly (over 65 years), diabetics, and chronic cigarette smokers. Long term use of PPIs have potential increased risks of B12 deficiency; iron deficiency; hypomagnesemia; susceptibility to pneumonia, enteric infections, fractures, hypergastrinemia and cancer, and cardiovascular effects of myocardial infarction (MI). In the elderly, studies have demonstrated increased risk for Clostridium difficile infection, bone loss, and fractures from long-term use of PPIs. Given treatment criteria outweighing risk factors, if a PPI is to be used, omeprazole (Prilosec), lansoprazole (Prevacid), and esomeprazole (Nexium) are to be considered over second-line therapy of other PPIs such as pantoprazole (Protonix), dexlansoprazole (Dexilant), and rabeprazole (Aciphex). Submitted reports have not described or provided any GI diagnosis that meets the criteria to indicate medical treatment. Review of the records show no documentation of any specific history, identified symptoms, or confirmed GI diagnosis to warrant this medication. The Prilosec 40mg one tablet by mouth quantity 30 is not medically necessary and appropriate.