

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0171995		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/14/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	11/12/2014
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/28/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	08/12/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	09/01/2015

### 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: Texas, New York, California  
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine

### 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 applicant is a represented 49-year-old who has filed a claim for chronic knee and leg pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of November 12, 2014. In a Utilization Review report dated August 12, 2015, the claims administrator failed to approve a request for Norco. The claims administrator referenced an RFA form of August 12, 2015, a telephone encounter of August 12, 2015, and a progress note of July 14, 2015 in its determination. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On November 12, 2014, the applicant reported ongoing complaints of right knee pain. The applicant was off of work, it was reported. The applicant was using Norco as of this date. Ancillary complaints of left knee pain were also reported at this point. The applicant was kept off of work. On July 14, 2015, the applicant reported ongoing complaints of knee pain 5 months removed from earlier right knee arthroscopic partial medial meniscectomy. The applicant also received a knee corticosteroid injection some 3 weeks prior. The applicant was off of work, it was acknowledged. The applicant reported complaints of limited range of motion about the knee with locking and catching present on walking. The applicant was on Diclofenac and Norco for pain relief, it was acknowledged. The applicant was again kept off of work. Viscosupplementation injection therapy was sought. No seeming discussion of medication efficacy transpired on this date. Norco was renewed via an RFA form dated August 12, 2015, again, seemingly without any supporting rationale.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Norco Tab 10-325 MG #60 with No Refills:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Opioids, criteria for use.

**Decision rationale:** No, the request for Norco, a short-acting opioid, was not medically necessary, medically appropriate, or indicated here. As noted on page 80 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, the cardinal criteria for continuation of opioid therapy include evidence of successful return to work, improved functioning, and/or reduced pain achieved as a result of the same. Here, however, the applicant was off of work, on total temporary disability, it was reported on July 14, 2015. No seeming discussion of medication efficacy transpired on that date. The attending provider failed to identify quantifiable decrements in pain or meaningful, material improvements in function (if any) effected as a result of ongoing Norco usage. Therefore, the request was not medically necessary.