

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0064362		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	04/10/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	02/23/2006
<b>Decision Date:</b>	05/12/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	03/31/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	04/06/2015

### 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 57 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on February 23, 2005. He reported chronic neck pain radiating into bilateral upper extremities, back pain radiating into the buttock, down the right leg and into the ankle and right knee pain. The injured worker was diagnosed as having cervical discogenic syndrome, cervical radiculitis, tenosynovitis of the foot and ankle, lumbar degenerative disc disease, lumbar spinal stenosis and shoulder impingement. Treatment to date has included diagnostic studies, conservative care, medications and work restrictions. Currently, the injured worker complains of continued neck pain radiating into bilateral upper extremities, back pain radiating into the buttock, down the right leg and into the ankle, right knee pain, right elbow pain, upper extremity tingling and numbness and foot tingling and numbness. The injured worker reported an industrial injury in 2005, resulting in the above noted pain. He was treated conservatively without complete resolution of the pain. Evaluation on December 30, 2014, revealed continued pain. He noted improvement with medications. He was encouraged to continue a home exercise plan and Medications were requested.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Vicodin 5/300 #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(s) 74-96.

**Decision rationale:** Per the MTUS Guidelines cited, 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 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 without acute flare, new injury, or progressive deterioration. The Vicodin 5/300 #60 is not medically necessary and appropriate.