

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0068452		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	04/16/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/11/2008
<b>Decision Date:</b>	06/30/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	03/30/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	04/10/2015

### 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: 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 injured worker is a 60-year-old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 4/11/2008. Diagnoses have included neck pain on the left side with radiating symptoms to the left arm, low back pain on the left side with radiating symptoms to the left leg posteriorly and left shoulder pain. Treatment to date has included magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), acupuncture and medication. According to the progress report dated 3/11/2015, the injured worker complained of increased pain in the left shoulder region. She state that without medication her pain was at a severe level; with medication her pain was at a moderate level. The injured worker appeared to be in mild discomfort. She had limited cervical spine range of motion in all planes. Authorization was requested for Fentanyl patches and Norco.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Fentanyl patch 50mcg Qty: 10.00: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines opioids Page(s): 44, 47.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines 9792.20 - 9792.26 Page(s): 60.

**Decision rationale:** According to the MTUS in regard to medications for chronic pain, only one medication should be given at a time, and interventions that are active and passive should remain unchanged at the time of the medication change. A trial should be given for each individual medication. A record of pain and function with the medication should be recorded. According to this citation from the MTUS, medications should not be initiated in a group fashion, and specific benefit with respect to pain and function should be documented for each medication. There is no documentation of the above criteria for either of the narcotics that the patient has been taking. A previous utilization review decision provided the patient with sufficient quantity of medication to be weaned slowly. Fentanyl patches 50mcg Qty: 10.00 is not medically necessary.

**Fentanyl patch Qty: 10.00 (do not distribute until 4/11/15): Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines opioids Page(s): 44, 47.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines 9792.20 - 9792.26 Page(s): 60.

**Decision rationale:** According to the MTUS in regard to medications for chronic pain, only one medication should be given at a time, and interventions that are active and passive should remain unchanged at the time of the medication change. A trial should be given for each individual medication. A record of pain and function with the medication should be recorded. According to this citation from the MTUS, medications should not be initiated in a group fashion, and specific benefit with respect to pain and function should be documented for each medication. There is no documentation of the above criteria for either of the narcotics that the patient has been taking. A previous utilization review decision provided the patient with sufficient quantity of medication to be weaned slowly. Fentanyl patch Qty: 10.00 (do not distribute until 4/11/15) is not medically necessary.

**Norco 10/325mg Qty: 120.00: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines opioids Page(s): 80.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines 9792.20 - 9792.26 Page(s): 74-94.

**Decision rationale:** The Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that continued or long-term use of opioids should be based on documented pain relief and functional improvement or improved quality of life. Despite the long-term use of Norco, the patient has reported very little, if any, functional improvement or pain relief over the course of the last 6 months. A previous utilization review decision provided the patient with sufficient quantity of medication to be weaned slowly off of narcotic. Norco 10/325mg Qty: 120.00 is not medically necessary.

**Norco 10/325mg Qty: 120.00 (do not distribute until 4/11/15): Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines opioids Page(s): 80.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines 9792.20 - 9792.26 Page(s): 74-94.

**Decision rationale:** The Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that continued or long-term use of opioids should be based on documented pain relief and functional improvement or improved quality of life. Despite the long-term use of Norco, the patient has reported very little, if any, functional improvement or pain relief over the course of the last 6 months. A previous utilization review decision provided the patient with sufficient quantity of medication to be weaned slowly off of narcotic. Norco 10/325mg Qty: 120.00 (do not distribute until 4/11/15) is not medically necessary.