

Case Number:	CM15-0074127		
Date Assigned:	04/24/2015	Date of Injury:	08/31/2014
Decision Date:	05/22/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/06/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/17/2015

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: Emergency 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 43 year old female who sustained a work related injury August 31, 2014. While transferring a patient from a shower chair to a wheelchair, she developed pain in her lower back. She was treated with physical therapy and epidural injections. According to a pain medicine evaluation, performed March 26, 2015, the injured worker presented with complaints of mid back, low back, bilateral buttock, and right lower extremity pain, rated 6/10, and described as constant and sharp. The right lower extremity pain is associated with numbness. Impression is documented as lumbar degenerative disc disease; right lower extremity radiculopathy; diffuse regional myofascial pain; chronic pain syndrome with both sleep and mood disorder; and medication related gastritis. Diagnoses are lumbago and degeneration of lumbar intervertebral disc. Treatment plan included recommendations for physical therapy and chronic pain psychological evaluation, and request for Norco, prescribed.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 10/325 mg: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, On-Going Management, Pages 78-80, Opioids for Chronic Pain, Pages 80-82 Page(s): 78-82.

Decision rationale: The requested Norco 10/325 mg is not medically necessary. CA MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines, Opioids, On-Going Management, Pages 78-80, Opioids for Chronic Pain, Pages 80-82, recommend continued use of this opiate for the treatment of moderate to severe pain, with documented objective evidence of derived functional benefit, as well as documented opiate surveillance measures. The injured worker has mid back, low back, bilateral buttock, and right lower extremity pain, rated 6/10, and described as constant and sharp. The right lower extremity pain is associated with numbness. The treating physician has not documented VAS pain quantification with and without medications, duration of treatment, objective evidence of derived functional benefit such as improvements in activities of daily living or reduced work restrictions or decreased reliance on medical intervention, nor measures of opiate surveillance including an executed narcotic pain contract or urine drug screening. The criteria noted above not having been met, Norco 10/325 mg is not medically necessary.