

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0076291		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	04/27/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	03/18/2013
<b>Decision Date:</b>	06/11/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	04/15/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	04/21/2015

### 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 52 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 3/18/2013. Diagnoses have included chronic cervicgia, chronic upper back pain, cervical/thoracic degenerative disc disease and pain related insomnia, depression and anxiety. Treatment to date has included cervical magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), cervical epidural injection, chiropractic treatment and medication. According to the progress report dated 3/24/2015, the injured worker complained of chronic upper back and neck pain. At times, he noted weakness in the left arm. He also reported some rare occurrences of radiating pain and numbness in the left upper extremity. The injured worker noted that with chiropractic treatment his need for his Norco was reduced from five tablets a day to three tablets a day. He rated his pain as 4/10 with medication and as great as 7/10 without medications. Physical exam revealed slight spasm over the thoracic spine. Authorization was requested for Norco.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Norco 10/325mg:** 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 10/325mg, 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 chronic upper back and neck pain. At times he noted weakness in the left arm. He also reported some rare occurrences of radiating pain and numbness in the left upper extremity. 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 10/325mg is not medically necessary.