

Case Number:	CM15-0098168		
Date Assigned:	05/29/2015	Date of Injury:	11/02/2006
Decision Date:	07/02/2015	UR Denial Date:	05/05/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/21/2015

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: Florida

Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Pain Management

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 61 year old male with an industrial injury dated 11/02/2006. The injured worker's diagnoses include bilateral hand pain and numbness with a history of bilateral carpal tunnel releases in 2001 and bilateral elbow pain with a reported history of lateral epicondylitis. Treatment consisted of diagnostic studies, prescribed medications, and periodic follow up visits. In a progress note dated 3/24/2015, the injured worker reported mild to moderate level pain and that his medications allow him to function in his daily activities. Objective findings revealed tenderness about the right lateral elbow and slight discomfort with resisted right wrist extension. The treatment plan consisted of medication management. The treating physician prescribed Norco 10-325mg #210 now under review.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Norco 10-325mg #210: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation official disability guidelines - pain, opioids.

Decision rationale: ODG guidelines support opioids with: Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Pain assessment should include: current pain; the least reported pain over the period since last assessment; average pain; intensity of pain after taking the opioid; how long it takes for pain relief; and how long pain relief lasts. Satisfactory response to treatment may be indicated by the patient's decreased pain, increased level of function, or improved quality of life. Information from family members or other caregivers should be considered in determining the patient's response to treatment. The 4 A's for Ongoing Monitoring: Four domains have been proposed as most relevant for ongoing monitoring of chronic pain patients on opioids: pain relief, side effects, physical and psychosocial functioning, and the occurrence of any potentially aberrant (or non-adherent) drug-related behaviors. The medical records report chronic pain but does not document ongoing opioid risk mitigation tool use in support of chronic therapy congruent with ODG guidelines. As such, chronic opioids are not medically necessary.