

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM13-0022201		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	11/13/2013	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	06/11/2003
<b>Decision Date:</b>	01/30/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	08/15/2013
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	09/09/2013

### HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to a physician reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. The physician reviewer is Board Certified in Occupational Medicine, and is licensed to practice in California. 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 physician 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

### 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 applicant is a represented [REDACTED] employee who has filed a claim for chronic wrist, elbow, neck, and arm pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of June 11, 2003. Thus far, the applicant has been treated with the following: Analgesic medications; topical compounds; attorney representation; transfer of care to and from various providers in various specialties; prior elbow and wrist surgeries in 2003 and 2004; and extensive periods of time off of work. In a utilization review report of August 15, 2013, the claims administrator denied a request for topical compound. The applicant's attorney later appealed. An earlier progress note of August 7, 2013 is notable for comments that the applicant continues to have uncontrolled pain despite using Opana. Her pain level varies from 7/10 with medications and 9/10 without medications. The applicant's medication list includes Bentyl, Atarax, Opana, and Opana extended release, Protonix, Phenergan, and Requip. Numerous medications are refilled, including Exalgo, Opana, and Opana extended release.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**One (1) topical compounded Meloxicam, Lidocaine/Pilocaine, Topiramate tablets 200mg:**  
Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 3 Initial Approaches to Treatment, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics Page(s): 111.

**Decision rationale:** The Physician Reviewer's decision rationale: As noted in the MTUS-adopted ACOEM Guidelines in chapter 3, oral pharmaceuticals are a first-line palliative method. In this case, the applicant is using several first-line oral analgesics, including Exalgo, Opana, etc., effectively obviating the need for topical analgesics such as the compound being proposed here which is, per page 111 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, "largely experimental." Therefore, the request is not certified.

**Sterile water:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 3 Initial Approaches to Treatment, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics Page(s): 111.

**Decision rationale:** The Physician Reviewer's decision rationale: The sterile water, in this case, appears to represent a base in which to mix the topical compound. As noted above, in question #1, the topical compound itself has been not certified on the grounds that topical analgesics are largely experimental and on the grounds that the applicant is using first-line oral pharmaceuticals without any reported difficulty, impediment, and/or impairment. Since the compound itself has been non certified, the sterile water base to mix the compound in is likewise not certified.