

Case Number:	CM14-0129736		
Date Assigned:	08/20/2014	Date of Injury:	03/15/2012
Decision Date:	10/03/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/05/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/14/2014

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. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Anesthesiology, has a subspecialty in Pain Management and is licensed to practice in Tennessee. 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/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 patient is a 40-year-old male who has submitted a claim for lumbar sprain/strain, myofascial pain, associated with an industrial injury date of March 15, 2012. Medical records from 2014 were reviewed. The latest progress report, dated 07/29/2014, showed continued low back pain rated at 8/10. Physical examination revealed an antalgic gait. There was tenderness on the lumbar area with noted spasms. Treatment to date has included home exercise program, TENS, and medications such as Mentherm gel prescribed January 2014. Utilization review from 08/05/2014 denied the request for the purchase of Mentherm Gel (Methyl Salicylate/Menthol) because there was lack of clinical information. There was no information regarding rationale for the use of the cream. There was question as to use, benefit, tolerance of oral medications, particularly the oral form of similar medications in the cream. There was no documented adverse side effect from oral medications. There was question as to any past medical history that precludes use of oral medications. There was question as to trial and results of other topical agents, including over the counter versions.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Compound Medication - Mentherm Gel (Methyl Salicylate /Menthol): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics, compounded.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines SALICYLATE; TOPICAL ANALGESICS Page(s): 105; 111-113. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain Section, Topical Salicylates

Decision rationale: According to page 111 of CA MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, topical analgesics are largely experimental in use with few randomized controlled trials to determine efficacy or safety. Methoderm gel contains methyl salicylate and menthol. Regarding the Menthol component, CA MTUS does not cite specific provisions, but the ODG Pain Chapter states that the FDA has issued an alert in 2012 indicating that topical OTC pain relievers that contain menthol, or methyl salicylate, may in rare instances cause serious burns. Regarding the Methyl Salicylate component, CA MTUS states on page 105 that salicylate topicals are significantly better than placebo in chronic pain. In this case, Methoderm gel was prescribed as adjuvant therapy to oral medications. However, the requested Methoderm has the same formulation of over-the-counter products such as BenGay. It has not been established that there is any necessity for this specific brand name. There is no compelling indication for this request. Moreover, the frequency of application and the quantity prescribed was not specified. The request was incomplete. Therefore, the request of Methoderm gel (Methyl Salicylate/Menthol) is not medically necessary.