

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM13-0034336		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	12/06/2013	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/22/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	05/01/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	10/01/2013
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	10/15/2013

### 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, District of Columbia, Maryland  
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, 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 36-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on April 22, 2012. He reported a sudden onset of left ankle up to the knee pain. The injured worker was diagnosed as having effusion of knee, ankle sprain, ankle pain, ankle capsulitis, and chronic pain. Treatment to date has included MRI, x-rays, and urine drug screening, casting/bracing, work modifications, left ankle injection, home exercises, and medications including oral and topical pain, topical compound cream, muscle relaxant, anti-epilepsy, proton pump inhibitor, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory. On October 4, 2013, the injured worker complains of severe left ankle pain. The pain is sharp, burning, and throbbing. The physical exam revealed a left-sided antalgic gait that is slightly slow over the left ankle. There was no erythema, streaking, or heat. His ankle brace is worn out. No other changes were noted. The treatment plan includes continuing the proton pump inhibitor and topical pain medication.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Medrox Cream, tsp 4 times per day prn,:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Salicylate Topical Page(s): 105, 112-113.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics Page(s): 111-113.

**Decision rationale:** Medrox cream contains capsaicin, methyl salicylate, and menthol. Capsaicin may have an indication for chronic lower back pain in this context. Per MTUS p 112 Indications: There are positive randomized studies with capsaicin cream in patients with osteoarthritis, fibromyalgia, and chronic non-specific back pain, but it should be considered experimental in very high doses. Although topical capsaicin has moderate to poor efficacy, it may be particularly useful (alone or in conjunction with other modalities) in patients whose pain has not been controlled successfully with conventional therapy. Methyl salicylate may have an indication for chronic pain in this context. The MTUS recommends topical salicylate (e.g., Ben-Gay, methyl salicylate) as significantly better than placebo in chronic pain. However, the CA MTUS, ODG, National Guidelines Clearinghouse, and ACOEM provide no evidence-based recommendations regarding the topical application of menthol. It is the opinion of this IMR reviewer that a lack of endorsement, a lack of mention, inherently implies a lack of recommendation, or a status equivalent to "not recommended". Since menthol is not medically indicated, then the overall product is not indicated per MTUS as outlined below. MTUS Guidelines state that any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended. Regarding the use of multiple medications, Guidelines also states that only one medication should be given at a time, and interventions that are active and passive should remain unchanged at the time of the medication change. A trial should be given for each individual medication. Analgesic medications should show effects within 1 to 3 days, and the analgesic effect of antidepressants should occur within 1 week. A record of pain and function with the medication should be recorded. The recent AHRQ review of comparative effectiveness and safety of analgesics for osteoarthritis concluded that each of the analgesics was associated with a unique set of benefits and risks, and no currently available analgesic was identified as offering a clear overall advantage compared with the others. Therefore, it would be optimal to trial each medication individually.