

Case Number:	CM14-0204095		
Date Assigned:	12/16/2014	Date of Injury:	04/05/2012
Decision Date:	02/06/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/05/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/05/2014

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 Physical Medicine Rehab, has a subspecialty in Pain 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 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:

This is a patient with a date of injury of April 5, 2012. A utilization review determination dated November 5, 2014 recommends noncertification of Flector patch. A progress report dated October 1, 2014 identifies subjective complaints of back pain radiating down the left leg. The note indicates that the pain is 4/10 with medication and 4/10 without medication. The patient states that the "medications are working well," with no side effects reported. "She notes that the Flector patch has been very helpful to reduce pain and inflammation." Failed medications include tizanidine and gabapentin. Objective examination finding reveals restricted range of motion in the lumbar spine with tenderness to palpation and muscle spasm in the paravertebral muscles. Diagnoses include lumbar radiculopathy, low back pain, and lumbar facet syndrome. The treatment plan recommends continuing Flector patch, amitriptyline, Norco, and other medication. Additionally, medial branch blocks are requested. The patient has been encouraged to perform a home exercise program.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Flector 1.3% patch 1 patch/QD as needed #30: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Pain Chapter, Flector[®] patch (diclofenac epolamine).

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for Flector patch, Occupational Medicine Practice Guidelines do not address Flector specifically, but do contain criteria for topical NSAIDs. ODG states Flector patches are not recommended as a first-line treatment. The Guidelines additionally state Flector patch is FDA indicated for acute strains, sprains, and contusions. Within the medical information made available for review, the patient is noted to have chronic pain. There is no documentation of acute strains, sprains, and contusions. Additionally, there is no indication that the patient has failed oral NSAIDs or has contraindications to their use. In the absence of such documentation, the currently requested Flector patch is not medically necessary.