

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0004527		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	01/15/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	09/23/2009
<b>Decision Date:</b>	03/16/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	12/11/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	01/09/2015

### 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: Indiana

Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine

### 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 42 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 9/23/2009. The current diagnoses are lumbar spine strain, herniated nucleus pulposus with degenerative disc disease L5-S1, status post lumbar fusion (10/18/2011), and probable non-union. Currently, the injured worker complains of low back pain that radiates to the left lower extremity. The pain is rated 4/10 with medication and 8/10 without. Treatment to date has included medications, 3 epidural steroid injections, and surgery. The treating physician is requesting Zanaflex 4mg #120, which is now under review. On 12/11/2014, Utilization Review had non-certified a request for Zanaflex 4mg #120. The California MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines were cited.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**120 tablets of Zanaflex 4mg:** Upheld

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

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle Relaxants; Zanaflex Page(s): 63-67.

**Decision rationale:** Zanaflex is the brand name version of tizanidine, which is a muscle relaxant. MTUS states concerning muscle relaxants "Recommend non-sedating muscle relaxants with caution as a second-line option for short-term treatment of acute exacerbations in patients with chronic LBP. (Chou, 2007) (Mens, 2005) (VanTulder, 1998) (van Tulder, 2003) (van Tulder, 2006) (Schnitzer, 2004) (See, 2008) Muscle relaxants may be effective in reducing pain and muscle tension, and increasing mobility. However, in most LBP cases, they show no benefit beyond NSAIDs in pain and overall improvement. Also there is no additional benefit shown in combination with NSAIDs. Efficacy appears to diminish over time, and prolonged use of some medications in this class may lead to dependence. (Homik, 2004) Sedation is the most commonly reported adverse effect of muscle relaxant medications. These drugs should be used with caution in patients driving motor vehicles or operating heavy machinery. Drugs with the most limited published evidence in terms of clinical effectiveness include chlorzoxazone, methocarbamol, dantrolene and baclofen. (Chou, 2004) According to a recent review in American Family Physician, skeletal muscle relaxants are the most widely prescribed drug class for musculoskeletal conditions (18.5% of prescriptions), and the most commonly prescribed antispasmodic agents are carisoprodol, cyclobenzaprine, metaxalone, and methocarbamol, but despite their popularity, skeletal muscle relaxants should not be the primary drug class of choice for musculoskeletal conditions. (See2, 2008)."MTUS further states, "Tizanidine (Zanaflex, generic available) is a centrally acting alpha2-adrenergic agonist that is FDA approved for management of spasticity; unlabeled use for low back pain. (Malanga, 2008) Eight studies have demonstrated efficacy for low back pain. (Chou, 2007) One study (conducted only in females) demonstrated a significant decrease in pain associated with chronic myofascial pain syndrome and the authors recommended its use as a first line option to treat myofascial pain. (Malanga, 2002) May also provide benefit as an adjunct treatment for fibromyalgia. (ICSI, 2007)."The employee was last on Zanaflex in July 2014, and there is no indication there is an acute worsening of pain to justify taking this medication again, as indicated by the guidelines above. He is also taking an NSAIDs and the guidelines state there is little benefit to combining Zanaflex with the NSAID. Therefore, the request for 120 tablets of Zanaflex 4mg is not medically necessary.