

Case Number:	CM15-0009941		
Date Assigned:	01/27/2015	Date of Injury:	08/16/2011
Decision Date:	04/02/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/13/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/16/2015

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: California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Internal 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 46 year old female who suffered a work related injury on 08/16/11. Per the physician notes from 12/23/14, she complains of ongoing neck, left shoulder and left knee pain. She has had cortisone injection to her left shoulder with 60% relief noted. Cervical pillow did not help. The treatment plan consists of Norco, Ambien, and Flexeril, repeat cortisone injection to her left shoulder, and continue to be active. On 01/15/15, the Claims Administrator non-certified the Flexeril, citing MTUS guidelines. The non-certified treatment was subsequently appealed for Independent Medical review.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Retrospective Flexeril 7.5mg (dispensed 12/23/14) QTY: 15.00: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril) Page(s): 41, 64.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 3 Initial Approaches to Treatment Page(s): 47, 49, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril) Pages 41-42. Muscle relaxants Pages 63-66. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation FDA Prescribing Information Flexeril Cyclobenzaprine <http://www.drugs.com/pro/flexeril.html>.

Decision rationale: Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) addresses muscle relaxants. American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) 2nd Edition (2004) states that muscle relaxants seem no more effective than NSAIDs for treating patients with musculoskeletal problems, and using them in combination with NSAIDs has no demonstrated benefit. Muscle relaxants may hinder return to function by reducing the patient's motivation or ability to increase activity. Table 3-1 states that muscle relaxants are not recommended. Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines addresses muscle relaxants. Muscle relaxants should be used with caution as a second-line option for short-term treatment. Efficacy appears to diminish over time, and prolonged use of some medications in this class may lead to dependence. According to a review in American Family Physician, muscle relaxants should not be the primary drug class of choice for musculoskeletal conditions. Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril) is an option for a short course of therapy. Treatment should be brief. The addition of Cyclobenzaprine to other agents is not recommended. FDA guidelines state that Cyclobenzaprine is indicated for acute musculoskeletal conditions. Cyclobenzaprine should be used only for short periods (up to two or three weeks) because adequate evidence of effectiveness for more prolonged use is not available. Medical records document that the patient's occupational injuries are chronic. MTUS, ACOEM, and FDA guidelines do not support the use of Flexeril (Cyclobenzaprine) for chronic conditions. Medical records indicate the long-term use of muscle relaxants, which is not supported by MTUS and FDA guidelines. The use of Flexeril is not supported by MTUS and ACOEM guidelines. Therefore, the request for Flexeril is not medically necessary.