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| Case Number: | CM15-0139224 | | |
| Date Assigned: | 07/29/2015 | Date of Injury: | 01/31/1998 |
| Decision Date: | 08/26/2015 | UR Denial Date: | 06/19/2015 |
| Priority: | Standard | Application Received: | 07/17/2015 |

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: North Carolina
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

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 52 year old male injured worker suffered an industrial injury on 1-31-1998. The diagnoses included lumbar degenerative disc disease and lumbar spondylosis with disc herniation. The treatment included medications and sacroiliac injections. On 6-16-2015, the treating provider reported a significant flare of pain, spasms and swelling in the low back due to increased activity. The Request for Authorization and Independent Medical Review Application indicated Soma included 1 refill. The notes from 1-21-2015, 4-19-2015 and 5-19-2015 indicated the injured worker had already been taking Soma for low back muscle spasms. On exam, the lumbar range of motion was significantly limited due to pain with muscle tenderness. The injured worker had not returned to work. The requested treatments included Soma.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Soma 350 mg, sixty count with one refill: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Muscle Relaxants (for Pain).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines muscle relaxants Page(s): 63-65.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on muscle relaxants states: 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) (Van Tulder, 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) (Chou, 2004) This medication is not intended for long-term use per the California MTUS. The medication has not been prescribed for the flare-up of chronic low back pain. This is not an approved use for the medication. For these reasons, criteria for the use of this medication have not been met. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.