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| <b>Case Number:</b>   | CM15-0169692 |                              |            |
| <b>Date Assigned:</b> | 09/10/2015   | <b>Date of Injury:</b>       | 09/01/1997 |
| <b>Decision Date:</b> | 10/07/2015   | <b>UR Denial Date:</b>       | 08/07/2015 |
| <b>Priority:</b>      | Standard     | <b>Application Received:</b> | 08/28/2015 |

### 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: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

### 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 66 year old female sustained an injury on 9/1/1997. Initial report of the injury and complaint are not found in the records reviewed. The injured worker was diagnosed as having an annular tear of a lumbar disc, myalgia and myositis, and bilateral trigger thumb. Treatment to date has included a zero gravity chair and medications. The worker also finds some relief with periodic stretching. The worker is seen for her current medications. Currently, the injured worker takes Feldene for pain in the back and hands. The worker states she tried to go off Feldene and had difficulty grasping due to loss of thumb to index pincer grasp when not on Feldene. She takes Temazepam at bedtime to promote sleep and takes alprazolam each morning. There are no notes concerning onset of relief, duration of relief, or qualitative and quantitative pain levels. A request for authorization was submitted 08/03/2015 for 1 prescription of Feldene 20mg #90. A utilization review decision (08/07/2015) non-certified the prospective request for 1 prescription of Feldene 20mg #90.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**1 prescription of Feldene 20mg #90: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain (Chronic) Piroxicam (Feldene) updated 7/15/2015.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), NSAIDs, GI symptoms & cardiovascular risk, NSAIDs, hypertension and renal function, NSAIDs, specific drug list & adverse effects.

**Decision rationale:** Anti-inflammatories are the traditional first line of treatment, to reduce pain so activity and functional restoration can resume, but long-term use may not be warranted. Monitoring of NSAIDs functional benefit is advised as per Guidelines, long-term use of NSAIDs beyond a few weeks may actually retard muscle and connective tissue healing and increase the risk for heart attack and stroke in patients with or without heart disease, as well as potential for hip fractures even within the first weeks of treatment, increasing with longer use and higher doses of the NSAID. Available reports submitted have not adequately addressed the indication to continue a NSAID for a chronic 1997 injury nor have they demonstrated any functional efficacy derived from treatment already rendered. Intolerance to oral medications is not documented. Additionally, there are evidence-based published articles noting that topical treatment with NSAIDs and other medications can result in blood concentrations and systemic effects comparable to those from oral treatment. It was advised that topical non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs should be used with the same precautions as other forms of the drugs in high risk patients, especially those with reduced drug metabolism as in renal failure. The 1 prescription of Feldene 20mg #90 is not medically necessary and appropriate.