

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0198052		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	10/13/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/15/1990
<b>Decision Date:</b>	11/24/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	09/16/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	10/08/2015

### 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: Massachusetts

Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, Pain Management

### 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 66 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 4-15-90. A review of the medical records indicates he is undergoing treatment for L4-5 spondylolithesis - status post laminectomy and severe degenerative disc disease of the lumbosacral spine, as well as spinal stenosis. Medical records (3-6-15 to 8-31-15) indicate ongoing complaints of low back pain. The injured worker reports that the pain is "constant". He also notes that he is "doing well on taking Fiorinal with Codeine for relief of pain". He reports that Zanaflex "has not been helpful". The physical exam (3-6-15) reveals "focal tenderness" of the low back. Straight leg raising test is positive bilaterally. Decreased Achilles reflex is noted bilaterally. Range of motion is decreased in the cervical and lumbar spine. Diagnostic studies are not included in the provided records. Treatment has included medications: Fiorinal with Codeine #3 and Zanaflex. The injured worker has been taking Fiorinal with Codeine #3 since, at least, 3-6-15. The utilization review (9-16-15) includes requests for authorization for Fiorinal with Codeine #120 and Soma 350mg #30. Soma was denied. Fiorinal with Codeine was modified to a quantity of 40.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Fiorinal with codeine, #120:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG).

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Opioids, criteria for use.

**Decision rationale:** According to the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines section on Opioids, On-Going Management, p 74-97, (a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed, and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy. (b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. (c) Office: Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Pain assessment should include: current pain; the least reported pain over the period since last assessment; average pain; intensity of pain after taking the opioid; how long it takes for pain relief; and how long pain relief lasts. Satisfactory response to treatment may be indicated by the injured worker's decreased pain, increased level of function, or improved quality of life. Information from family members or other caregivers should be considered in determining the injured worker's response to treatment. The 4 A's for Ongoing Monitoring: Four domains have been proposed as most relevant for ongoing monitoring of chronic pain injured workers on opioids: pain relief, side effects, physical and psychosocial functioning, and the occurrence of any potentially aberrant (or non-adherent) drug-related behaviors. These domains have been summarized as the "4 A's" (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug taking behaviors). The monitoring of these outcomes over time should affect therapeutic decisions and provide a framework for documentation of the clinical use of these controlled drugs. (Passik, 2000) (d) Home: To aid in pain and functioning assessment, the injured worker should be requested to keep a pain diary that includes entries such as pain triggers, and incidence of end-of-dose pain. It should be emphasized that using this diary will help in tailoring the opioid dose. This should not be a requirement for pain management. (e) Use of drug screening or in injured worker treatment with issues of abuse, addiction, or poor pain control. (f) Documentation of misuse of medications (doctor-shopping, uncontrolled drug escalation, drug diversion). (g) Continuing review of overall situation with regard to non-opioid means of pain control. (h) Consideration of a consultation with a multidisciplinary pain clinic if doses of opioids are required beyond what is usually required for the condition or pain does not improve on opioids in 3 months. Consider a psych consult if there is evidence of depression, anxiety or irritability. Additionally, the MTUS states that continued use of opioids requires (a) the injured worker has returned to work, (b) the injured worker has improved functioning and pain. There is no current documentation of baseline pain, pain score with use of opioids, functional improvement on current regimen, side effects or review of potentially aberrant drug taking behaviors as outlined in the MTUS and as required for ongoing treatment. Therefore, at this time, the requirements for treatment have not been met and not medically necessary.

**Soma 350mg, #30:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Carisprodol (Soma).

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Muscle relaxants (for pain).

**Decision rationale:** According to the MTUS, Carisoprodol is not recommended. This medication is not indicated for long-term use. Carisoprodol is a commonly prescribed, centrally acting skeletal muscle relaxant whose primary active metabolite is meprobamate (a schedule-IV controlled substance). Carisoprodol is now scheduled in several states but not on a federal level. It has been suggested that the main effect is due to generalized sedation and treatment of anxiety. Abuse has been noted for sedative and relaxant effects. In regular abusers the main concern is the accumulation of meprobamate. Carisoprodol abuse has also been noted in order to augment or alter effects of other drugs. This includes the following: (1) increasing sedation of benzodiazepines or alcohol; (2) use to prevent side effects of cocaine; (3) use with tramadol to produce relaxation and euphoria; (4) as a combination with hydrocodone, an effect that some abusers claim is similar to heroin (referred to as a Las Vegas Cocktail); & (5) as a combination with codeine (referred to as Soma Coma). (Reeves, 1999) (Reeves, 2001) (Reeves, 2008) (Scheers, 2004) There was a 300% increase in numbers of emergency room episodes related to carisoprodol from 1994 to 2005. (DHSS, 2005) Intoxication appears to include subdued consciousness, decreased cognitive function, and abnormalities of the eyes, vestibular function, appearance, gait and motor function. Intoxication includes the effects of both carisoprodol and meprobamate, both of which act on different neurotransmitters. (Bramness, 2007) (Bramness, 2004) A withdrawal syndrome has been documented that consists of insomnia, vomiting, tremors, muscle twitching, anxiety, and ataxia when abrupt discontinuation of large doses occurs. This is similar to withdrawal from meprobamate. (Reeves, 2007) (Reeves, 2004) There is little research in terms of weaning of high dose carisoprodol and there is no standard treatment regimen for injured workers with known dependence. Most treatment includes treatment for symptomatic complaints of withdrawal. Another option is to switch to phenobarbital to prevent withdrawal with subsequent tapering. A maximum dose of phenobarbital is 500 mg/day and the taper is 30 mg/day with a slower taper in an out injured worker setting. Tapering should be individualized for each injured worker. (Boothby, 2003) For more information and references, see Muscle relaxants. See also Weaning of medications. Therefore, at this time, the requirements for treatment have not been met and are not medically necessary.