

Case Number:	CM15-0219144		
Date Assigned:	11/12/2015	Date of Injury:	11/28/2014
Decision Date:	12/21/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/05/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/06/2015

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, Oregon, Washington
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Orthopedic Surgery

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 69 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on November 28, 2014, incurring bilateral hand and shoulder injuries. He was diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome, bilateral cubital tunnel syndrome, and bilateral rotator cuff syndrome. Treatment included pain medications, anti-inflammatory drugs, and activity restrictions and modifications. He noted medications helped relieve his pain some of the time. On August 28, 2015, the injured worker underwent right carpal tunnel release. He was ordered on post-operative physical therapy for the right wrist. He was referred for left carpal tunnel release surgery in November, 2015. Currently, the injured worker complained of left shoulder pain rated 9 out of 10 and right shoulder pain rated 8 out of 10 and right wrist and hand pain rated 3 out of 10 on a pain scale from 0 to 10. He complained of persistent numbness and tingling in the radial three digits of both hands, right greater than the left. He noted increased weakness in the right hand radiating up into his shoulder. He noted more pain at night. Treatment included a urine drug screen with pain management. The treatment plan that was requested for authorization included a prescription for Bio-therm (Menthol Salicylate Capsaicin). On November 5, 2015, a request for a prescription for Bio-therm was non-certified by utilization review.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Bio-Therm 4 oz (Menthol Salicylate Capsaicin): Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Capsaicin, topical, Topical Analgesics.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Topical Analgesics.

Decision rationale: Per the CA MTUS regarding topical analgesics, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines, Topical analgesics, page 111-112. Largely experimental in use with few randomized controlled trials to determine efficacy or safety. Primarily recommended for neuropathic pain when trials of antidepressants and anticonvulsants have failed. There is little to no research to support the use of many of these agents. Any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended. CA MTUS guidelines state that Capsaicin, topical is "Recommended only as an option in patients who have not responded or are intolerant to other treatments." The indications for this topical medication are as follows: There are positive randomized studies with capsaicin cream in patients with osteoarthritis, fibromyalgia, and chronic non-specific back pain, but it should be considered experimental in very high doses. CA MTUS guidelines state that Salicylate topicals are "Recommended. Topical salicylate (e.g., Ben-Gay, methyl salicylate) is significantly better than placebo in chronic pain." In this case, the current request does not meet CA MTUS guidelines and therefore the request is not medically necessary.