

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0060351		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	04/06/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	10/03/2013
<b>Decision Date:</b>	05/12/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	03/27/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	03/30/2015

### 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 (IW) is a 53 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 10/03/2013. She reported pain in the left knee and right foot. The injured worker was diagnosed as having chronic left knee pain, likely osteoarthritis; chronic right heel pain, likely plantar fasciitis; and chronic low-grade low back pain. Treatment to date has included medications and a home exercise program. Currently, the injured worker complains of pain in the left knee. She responds well to the medications and performs home exercise program ten minutes daily. Voltaren significantly helps her knee pain. A request for authorization is made for Voltaren topical gel 1% QTY: 1.00, and Retrospective request for Celebrex 200mg QTY: 30.00.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Voltaren topical gel 1% QTY: 1.00:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents (NSAIDs).

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics Page 111-113. NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) Page 67-73.

**Decision rationale:** Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines address topical analgesics. Topical analgesics are largely experimental in use with few randomized controlled trials to determine efficacy or safety. 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. The efficacy in clinical trials of topical NSAIDs has been inconsistent and most studies are small and of short duration. Topical NSAIDs have been shown in meta-analysis to be either not superior to placebo after two weeks, or with a diminishing effect after two weeks. For osteoarthritis of the knee, topical NSAID effect appeared to diminish over time. There are no long-term studies of their effectiveness or safety for chronic musculoskeletal pain. There is little evidence to utilize topical NSAIDs for treatment of osteoarthritis of the spine, hip or shoulder. Topical NSAIDs are not recommended for neuropathic pain as there is no evidence to support use. MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines addresses NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs). All NSAIDs have the U.S. Boxed Warning for associated risk of adverse cardiovascular events, including, myocardial infarction, stroke, and new onset or worsening of pre-existing hypertension. NSAIDs can cause ulcers and bleeding in the stomach and intestines at any time during treatment. Use of NSAIDs may compromise renal function. FDA package inserts for NSAIDs recommend periodic lab monitoring of a CBC and chemistry profile including liver and renal function tests. Routine blood pressure monitoring is recommended. It is generally recommended that the lowest effective dose be used for all NSAIDs for the shortest duration of time. Medical records document the long-term use of NSAIDs. Per MTUS, it is generally recommended that the lowest dose be used for NSAIDs for the shortest duration of time. The occupational injuries are chronic. Long-term NSAID use is not recommended by MTUS. The use of the NSAID Voltaren topical gel is not supported by MTUS guidelines. Therefore, the request for Voltaren topical gel is not medically necessary.