

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0061879		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	04/07/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	02/13/2013
<b>Decision Date:</b>	05/07/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	03/18/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	04/01/2015

### 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: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, 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 31 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 2/13/13. He reported pain in his lower back related to lifting a heavy object. The injured worker was diagnosed as having lumbar radiculopathy, lumbar sprain and myofascial pain. Treatment to date has included a lumbar MRI, a lumbar epidural injection, an EMG study and pain medications. As of the PR2 dated 2/23/15, the injured worker reports low back pain radiation to the left lower extremity. He indicated that current medication helps with activities of daily living. The treating physician noted lumbar flexion 40% and tenderness to palpation with spasms. The treating physician requested Gabapentin 300mg #80, Lidopro cream 121gm and TENs electrodes x 2 pair.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Gabapentin 300mg #80 for DOS 2/23/2015:** Overturned

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Anti-epilepsy drugs (AEDs).

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Anti-epilepsy drugs (AEDs), Page(s): 16-18.

**Decision rationale:** The claimant is more than 10 years status post work-related injury and continues to be treated for chronic radiating low back pain. He uses TENS in conjunction with a home exercise program with benefit. Oral medications include gabapentin at 1200 mg per day. Gabapentin has been shown to be effective in the treatment of painful diabetic neuropathy and postherpetic neuralgia and has been considered as a first-line treatment for neuropathic pain. When used for neuropathic pain, guidelines recommend a dose titration of greater than 1200 mg per day. In this case, the claimant's gabapentin dosing is consistent with recommended guidelines and is therefore medically necessary.

**Lidopro cream 121gm for DOS 2/23/2015:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines (1) Medications for chronic pain, (2) Topical Analgesics, Page(s): 11, 60.

**Decision rationale:** The claimant is more than 10 years status post work-related injury and continues to be treated for chronic radiating low back pain. He uses TENS in conjunction with a home exercise program with benefit. Medications include gabapentin at 1200 mg per day. LidoPro (capsaicin, lidocaine, menthol and methyl salicylate ointment) is a compounded topical medication. Menthol and methyl salicylate are used as a topical analgesic in over the counter medications such as Ben-Gay or Icy Hot. They work by first cooling the skin then warming it up, providing a topical anesthetic and analgesic effect which may be due to interference with transmission of pain signals through nerves. MTUS addresses the use of capsaicin which is recommended as an option in patients who have not responded or are intolerant to other treatments. However, guidelines recommend that when prescribing medications only one medication should be given at a time. By prescribing a multiple combination medication, in addition to the increased risk of adverse side effects, it would not be possible to determine whether any derived benefit is due to a particular component. Therefore, LidoPro is not medically necessary.

**TENS electrodes x 2 pair for DOS 2/23/2015:** Overturned

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Criteria for the use of TENS Page(s): 114-116.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines TENS, chronic pain (transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation), Page(s): 114.

**Decision rationale:** The claimant is more than 10 years status post work-related injury and continues to be treated for chronic radiating low back pain. He uses TENS in conjunction with a home exercise program with benefit. Medications include gabapentin at 1200 mg per day. TENS

is used for the treatment of chronic pain. TENS is thought to disrupt the pain cycle by delivering a different, non-painful sensation to the skin around the pain site. It is a noninvasive, cost effective, self-directed modality. In terms of the pads, there are many factors that can influence how long they last such as how often and for how long they are used. Cleaning after use and allowing 24 hours for drying is recommended with rotation of two sets of electrodes. Properly cared for, these electrodes should last for 1 - 3 months at a minimum. In this case, the claimant already uses TENS and the fact the electrodes need to be replaced is consistent with its continued use and efficacy. Therefore, the requested TENS electrodes are medically necessary.