

Case Number:	CM15-0080906		
Date Assigned:	05/01/2015	Date of Injury:	12/18/2004
Decision Date:	06/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/13/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/27/2015

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: North Carolina
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

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 43 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 12/18/04 involving his back. He continued to experience constant back and leg pain and then had a lumbar MRI which showed a disk bulge at L4 with an annular tear and another bulge at L4-5. He underwent physical therapy, two epidurals with not a good response, medications including low dose Vicodin, Celebrex and Flexeril and he was stable with this. He currently complains of back pain and pain, tingling and weakness of right leg. His pain level is 8/10 without medications and 4-6/10 with medications. Medications are Flexeril and Vicodin. Diagnosis is back pain with annular tear at L4-5. Treatments to date include medications, heating pad. In the progress note dated 2/9/15 the treating provider's plan of care includes Vicodin and Flexeril as he is stable on these medications.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Flexeril 5mg #30 x3 refills QTY: 120.00: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Flexeril (Cyclobenzaprine); Muscle relaxants (for pain).

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines muscle relaxants Page(s): 63-65.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on muscle relaxants states: Recommend non-sedating muscle relaxants with caution as a second-line option for short-term treatment of acute exacerbations in patients with chronic LBP. (Chou, 2007) (Mens, 2005) (Van Tulder, 1998) (Van Tulder, 2003) (Van Tulder, 2006) (Schnitzer, 2004) (See, 2008) Muscle relaxants may be effective in reducing pain and muscle tension, and increasing mobility. However, in most LBP cases, they show no benefit beyond NSAIDs in pain and overall improvement. Also there is no additional benefit shown in combination with NSAIDs. Efficacy appears to diminish over time, and prolonged use of some medications in this class may lead to dependence. (Homik, 2004) (Chou, 2004) This medication is not intended for long-term use per the California MTUS. The medication has not been prescribed for the flare-up of chronic low back pain. This is not an approved use for the medication. For these reasons, criteria for the use of this medication have not been met. Therefore the request is not medically necessary.