

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0125699		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	08/11/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	10/24/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/10/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	07/23/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	08/08/2014

### 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. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Family Medicine and is licensed to practice in California. 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

### CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This is a 64-year-old female who reported an industrial injury on 10/24/2012 to the back, two (2) years ago, attributed to the performance of her usual and customary job duties reported as transferring a patient. The patient complained of lower back pain. The MRI of the lumbar spine documented evidence of lumbar spine DDD and facet arthropathy. The patient reported some relief from an epidural steroid injection but continued to complain of lower back pain with radiation to the bilateral lower extremities. The objective findings on examination included marks tenderness to palpation over the lumbar paravertebral muscles; spasm; guarding; palpable trigger points with positive twitch response; numbness over the anterior lateral aspect of the right leg and into the calf with decreased range of motion of the lumbar spine. The diagnosis was bilateral radiculitis right greater than left; herniated disc agenda disease multilevel including L2-L3, L3-L4, and L4-L5 with disc desiccation at L4-L5 and synovial cyst formation. The treatment plan included a second epidural steroid injection; electrodiagnostic studies of the bilateral lower extremities; off work; hydrocodone; and cyclobenzaprine.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Flexeril 5mg#60:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 65.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 3 Initial Approaches to Treatment Page(s): 47, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines muscle relaxants for pain Page(s): 63-64. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) pain chapter- medications for chronic pain; muscle relaxants; cyclobenzaprine

**Decision rationale:** The prescription for Flexeril (cyclobenzaprine) 5 mg #60 is recommended for the short-term treatment of muscle spasms and not for the long-term treatment of chronic pain. The patient has been prescribed muscle relaxers on a long-term basis contrary to the recommendations of the CA MTUS. The patient is prescribed muscle relaxers on a routine basis for chronic pain. The muscle relaxers are directed to the relief of muscle spasms. The chronic use of muscle relaxants is not recommended by the CA MTUS, the ACOEM Guidelines, or the Official Disability Guidelines for the treatment of chronic pain. The use of muscle relaxants are recommended to be prescribed only briefly in a short course of therapy. There is no medical necessity demonstrated for the use of muscle relaxants for more than the initial short-term treatment of muscle spasms. There is a demonstrated medical necessity for the prescription of muscle relaxers on a routine basis for chronic neck and back pain. The cyclobenzaprine was used as an adjunct treatment for muscle and there is demonstrated medical necessity for the Cyclobenzaprine/Flexeril for the cited industrial injury. The continued prescription of a muscle relaxant was not consistent with the evidence-based guidelines. The California MTUS states that cyclobenzaprine is recommended for a short course of therapy. Limited, mixed evidence does not allow for a recommendation for chronic use. Cyclobenzaprine is a skeletal muscle relaxant and a central nervous system depressant with similar effects to tricyclic antidepressants. Evidence-based guidelines state that this medication is not recommended to be used for longer than 2 to 3 weeks. There is no demonstrated medical necessity for the prescription of Flexeril 5 mg #60 for the effects of the industrial injury.