

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0171870		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	10/23/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	12/06/2011
<b>Decision Date:</b>	11/25/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	09/20/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	10/17/2014

### 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 Anesthesia, has a subspecialty in Acupuncture & Pain 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:

The claimant is a 61year old male injured worker with date of injury 12/6/11 with related neck pain. Per progress report dated 12/2/13, the injured worker complained of persistent pain of the neck that was aggravated by repetitive motions of the neck, pushing, pulling, lifting, forward reach, and working at or above the shoulder level. He had low back pain that was aggravated by bending, lifting, twisting, pushing, pulling, sitting, standing, and walking multiple blocks. He had left knee pain. Per physical exam, the cervical spine was tender at the cervical paravertebral muscles and upper trapezius muscles with spasm. There was also tenderness at the lumbar paravertebral muscles. Treatment to date has included physical therapy and medication management. The date of UR decision was 9/30/14.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**RETROSPECTIVE: Medrox pain ointment 120gm with 2 refills (Date of service: 4/2/12):**  
Upheld

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

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesic Page(s): 60, 105, 111-113.

**Decision rationale:** Medrox ointment contains capsaicin, methyl salicylate, and menthol. Capsaicin may have had an indication for chronic lower back pain in this context. Per MTUS page 112 "Indications: 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. Although topical capsaicin has moderate to poor efficacy, it may be particularly useful (alone or in conjunction with other modalities) in patients whose pain has not been controlled successfully with conventional therapy." Methyl salicylate may have had an indication for chronic pain in this context. Per MTUS p105, "Recommended. Topical salicylate (e.g., Ben-Gay, methyl salicylate) is significantly better than placebo in chronic pain. (Mason-BMJ, 2004)." However, the CA MTUS, ODG, National Guidelines Clearinghouse, and ACOEM provide no evidence-based recommendations regarding the topical application of menthol. It is the opinion of this IMR reviewer that a lack of endorsement, a lack of mention, inherently implies a lack of recommendation, or a status equivalent to "not recommended". Since menthol is not medically indicated, then the overall product is not indicated per MTUS as outlined below. Note the statement on page 111: Any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended. Regarding the use of multiple medications, MTUS page 60 states "Only one medication should be given at a time, and interventions that are active and passive should remain unchanged at the time of the medication change. A trial should be given for each individual medication. Analgesic medications should show effects within 1 to 3 days, and the analgesic effect of antidepressants should occur within 1 week. A record of pain and function with the medication should be recorded. (Mens, 2005) The recent AHRQ review of comparative effectiveness and safety of analgesics for osteoarthritis concluded that each of the analgesics was associated with a unique set of benefits and risks, and no currently available analgesic was identified as offering a clear overall advantage compared with the others." Therefore, it would be optimal to trial each medication individually. The request is not medically necessary.