

Case Number:	CM14-0177019		
Date Assigned:	10/30/2014	Date of Injury:	03/15/2011
Decision Date:	12/05/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/24/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/27/2014

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 45-year-old male who reported an industrial injury on 3/15/2011, over 3 years ago, attributed to the performance of his usual and customary job duties reported as caring a 5 gallon water bottle on his shoulder slipped and caused him to twist his back. The patient was treated conservatively; however, underwent and L5-S1 anterior lumbar interbody fusion on 8/24/2011, which was complicated by a nonunion. The patient subsequently underwent a revision L5-S1 laminectomy and posterior fusion on 10/10/2013. The patient has been prescribed naproxen; muscle relaxers; oxycodone; and Methoderm ointment. The patient complained of increasing lower back pain and he had been out of his Norco. X-rays of the lumbar spine were certified and the patient was to follow up with pain management. The patient continued with oxycodone 30 mg #90 and Flexeril.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Flexeril: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril) Page(s): 41-42.

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) unspecified dose in quantity 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 California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (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 California MTUS, the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (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 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 cyclobenzaprine for the effects of the industrial injury. There is no demonstrated medical necessity for the prescription of cyclobenzaprine/Flexeril.