

Case Number:	CM15-0015114		
Date Assigned:	02/03/2015	Date of Injury:	10/02/2001
Decision Date:	03/26/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/22/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/27/2015

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: Texas, Ohio, California
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Preventive Medicine, Occupational Medicine

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 applicant is a represented 62-year-old Specialty Truck Parts employee who has filed a claim for chronic neck pain reportedly associated with an industrial injury of October 2, 2001. In a Utilization Review Report dated January 22, 2015, the claims administrator failed to approve a request for tizanidine. The claims administrator referenced an October 27, 2014 progress note in its determination. The claims administrator noted that the applicant had undergone earlier lumbar spine surgery. The applicant's attorney subsequently appealed. On October 27, 2014, the applicant reported ongoing complaints of low back pain. The applicant was given a diagnosis of chronic low back pain status post failed lumbar spine surgery. The applicant's medication list reportedly included Lodine, Lyrica, Remeron, Zoloft, Colace, MiraLax, and Dexilant. There was no mention made of tizanidine or Zanaflex on this occasion. On an RFA form of September 25, 2014, Dexilant, MiraLax, Colace, tizanidine, Lyrica, Detrol, Lunesta, Zoloft, Remeron, and Lodine were all endorsed. In a progress note of July 16, 2014, the applicant was described as using Tegretol, Zoloft, Remeron, trazodone, Lunesta, Prilosec, Lyrica, and Lodine. The applicant had issues with chronic low back pain, depression, anxiety, and sleep disturbance, it was noted. The applicant was apparently not working. The attending provider stated that the applicant's pain medications were somewhat beneficial and allowing him to walk for a lengthier period of time than previously.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Tizanidine 4mg: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Functional Restoration Approach to Chronic Pain Management page Chronic Pain Medical Treatment G.

Decision rationale: 1. No, the request for tizanidine, an antispasmodic, was not medically necessary, medically appropriate, or indicated here. While page 66 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines does acknowledge that tizanidine or Zanaflex is FDA approved in the management of spasticity but can be employed off-label for low back pain as was/is present here, this recommendation is, however, qualified by commentary made on page 7 of the MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines to the effect that an attending provider should incorporate some discussion of medication efficacy into his choice of recommendations. Here, however, the applicant was/is seemingly off of work. The attending provider failed to outline any meaningful or material improvements in function effected as a result of ongoing tizanidine (Zanaflex) usage. Indeed, several progress notes, referenced above, contained no mention of the applicant's actually using tizanidine (Zanaflex). It appears that tizanidine was renewed on RFA forms without the attending provider's explicitly commenting on various progress notes, including on October 27.