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| Case Number: | CM15-0122822 | | |
| Date Assigned: | 07/07/2015 | Date of Injury: | 01/09/1998 |
| Decision Date: | 07/31/2015 | UR Denial Date: | 06/16/2015 |
| Priority: | Standard | Application Received: | 06/25/2015 |

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 53 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on January 9, 1998. The injured worker was diagnosed as having cervical and lumbar degenerative disc disease (DDD), lumbago, reflex sympathetic dystrophy syndrome (RSD) of upper limb and cervical and lumbar facet arthropathy. Treatment to date has included psychological therapy numerous psychotropic medications, opioids, stationary bike and aqua therapy. A progress note dated June 3, 2015 provides the injured worker complains of neck and back pain. She reports neck and back pain, weakness, difficulty walking, difficulty falling asleep and difficulty staying asleep. She rates her pain 4/10. Physical exam notes a steady gait, depressed mood and affect and decreased range of motion (ROM) of the back due to pain. The plan includes Flexeril, Cymbalta and Fentanyl patch.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Two (1) Flexeril 10mg tabs #60; 2 tabs po qd 30 day fill; refill x2: Upheld

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

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.