MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM15-0124588		
Date Assigned:	07/09/2015	Date of Injury:	12/23/1997
Decision Date:	08/05/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/08/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/29/2015

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 72 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 12/23/97. The mechanism of injury was not clear. He currently complains of increasing low back pain, neck pain with pain level of 6710. On physical exam of the low back there was paraspinal muscle tenderness on palpation with painful bilateral range of motion. Medication is Norco. Diagnoses include low back pain from multifactorial chronic etiologies; compensatory myofascial pain, secondary to pain generator; left knee pain, persistent; lumbar radiculopathy, stenosis, spondylosis. Treatments to date include L3-L5 bilateral radiofrequency ablation with greater than 80% benefit; bilateral L3 transforaminal epidural steroid injection; home exercise program. In the progress note dated 5/21/15 the treating provider's plan of care includes a request for Ketaprofen 5%, cyclobenzaprine 1%, gabapentin 6%, Lidocaine 2% to reduce the effects of neuropathic, inflammatory as well as spasmodic pain.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Ketaprofen 5%, Cyclobenzaprine 1%, Gabapentin 6%, Lidocaine 6%: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 3 Initial Approaches to Treatment Page(s): 49, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topical Analgesics Page(s): 111.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines topical analgesics Page(s): 111-113.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on topical analgesics states: Recommended as an option as indicated below. Largely experimental in use with few randomized controlled trials to determine efficacy or safety. Primarily recommended for neuropathic pain when trials of antidepressants and anticonvulsants have failed. (Namaka, 2004) These agents are applied locally to painful areas with advantages that include lack of systemic side effects, absence of drug interactions, and no need to titrate. (Colombo, 2006) Many agents are compounded as monotherapy or in combination for pain control (including NSAIDs, opioids, capsaicin, local anesthetics, antidepressants, glutamate receptor antagonists, "adrenergic receptor agonist, adenosine, cannabinoids, cholinergic receptor agonists," agonists, prostanoids, bradykinin, adenosine triphosphate, biogenic amines, and nerve growth factor. (Argoff, 2006) There is little to no research to support the use of many of these agents. Any compounded product that contains at least one drug (or drug class) that is not recommended is not recommended. The requested medication contains ingredients, which are not indicated per the California MTUS for topical analgesic use. Therefore, the request is not medically necessary.