

Case Number:	CM15-0171387		
Date Assigned:	09/11/2015	Date of Injury:	06/04/2012
Decision Date:	10/09/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/28/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/31/2015

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 59 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 6-4-12. The injured worker was diagnosed as having pain in joint of the pelvis and thigh, sciatica, lumbar fracture, and disorders of the sacrum. Treatment to date has included aquatic therapy, left hip arthroscopy on 6-20-13, lumbar epidural steroid injections, and medication including topical Diclofenac cream. The treating physician noted oral medications cause significant gastrointestinal upset. The injured worker had been using Capsaicin cream since August 2015. Currently, the injured worker complains of low back pain, left hip pain, and left lower extremity pain. On 8-24-15 the treating physician requested authorization for Capsaicin 0.075% cream. On 8-28-15 the request was non-certified; the utilization review physician noted "the request is for 0.075% cream rather than the typically recommended 0.025%. I was unable to obtain information relating to why this particular percent strength was requested. Therefore this request is not medically necessary."

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Capsaicin 0.075% cream, quantity: 1: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Topical Analgesics.

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, biogenicamines, 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 (capsaicin only indicated when there is documented failure of first line treatment options which is not included in the provided medical records for review) which are not indicated per the California MTUS for topical analgesic use. Therefore the request is not medically necessary.