

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0154892		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/24/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	07/02/2004
<b>Decision Date:</b>	12/09/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	09/05/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	09/22/2014

### 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 Anesthesiology, has a subspecialty in Pain Management 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 62-year-old male with a 7/2/04 date of injury. At the time (8/28/14) of request for authorization for Ultram ER 100mg tab #30 with 2 refills and Tramadol 50mg tab #45 with 2 refills, there is documentation of subjective (low back pain radiating to bilateral lower extremity with numbness and tingling) and objective (tenderness over lumbar paraspinal and iliolumbar region) findings, current diagnoses (degeneration of lumbar intervertebral disc and chronic pain syndrome), and treatment to date (medications (including ongoing treatment with Ativan, Ultram ER 100mg, and Tramadol 50mg)). Medical report identifies that patient is taking low dose opioid; and that Tramadol helps the patient to walk the dog without frequent breaks. Regarding Ultram ER 100mg tab #30 with 2 refills, there is no documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects; moderate to severe pain; and functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications as a result of Ultram ER use to date. Regarding Tramadol 50mg tab #45 with 2 refills, there is no documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects; moderate to severe pain; and functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications as a result of Tramadol use to date.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Ultram ER 100mg tab #30 with 2 refills:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, Criteria for use of opioids therapeutic trial of opioids.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74-80; 113. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: Title 8, California Code of Regulations, section 9792.20

**Decision rationale:** MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects; as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of Opioids. In addition, specifically regarding Ultram, MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guideline identifies documentation of moderate to severe pain and Ultram used as a second-line treatment (alone or in combination with first-line drugs), as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of Ultram. MTUS-Definitions identifies that any treatment intervention should not be continued in the absence of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of degeneration of lumbar intervertebral disc and chronic pain syndrome. In addition, there is documentation of ongoing treatment with Ultram ER; and Ultram ER used as a second-line treatment. However, despite documentation that the patient is taking low dose opioid, there is no documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. In addition, despite documentation of pain, there is no (clear) documentation of moderate to severe pain. Furthermore, given documentation of ongoing treatment with Ultram ER, there is no documentation of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications as a result of Ultram ER use to date. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Ultram ER 100mg tab #30 with 2 refills is not medically necessary.

**Tramadol 50mg tab #45 with 2 refills:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, specific drug list.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 74-80; 113. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Other Medical Treatment Guideline or Medical Evidence: Title 8, California Code of Regulations, section 9792.20

**Decision rationale:** MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the

lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects; as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of Opioids. In addition, specifically regarding Tramadol, MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guideline identifies documentation of moderate to severe pain and Tramadol used as a second-line treatment (alone or in combination with first-line drugs), as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of Tramadol. MTUS-Definitions identifies that any treatment intervention should not be continued in the absence of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of degeneration of lumbar intervertebral disc and chronic pain syndrome. In addition, there is documentation of ongoing treatment with Tramadol; and Tramadol used as a second-line treatment. However, despite documentation that the patient is taking low dose opioid, there is no documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. In addition, despite documentation of pain, there is no (clear) documentation of moderate to severe pain. Furthermore, despite documentation that Tramadol helps the patient to walk the dog without frequent breaks, there is no (clear) documentation of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications as a result of Tramadol use to date. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request Tramadol 50mg tab #45 with 2 refills is not medically necessary.