

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0054238		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	07/07/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	08/01/2003
<b>Decision Date:</b>	09/08/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	03/31/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	04/23/2014

### 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 Internal Medicine and Emergency Medicine and is licensed to practice in Florida. 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:

This patient is a 63 year-old with a date of injury of 08/01/03. A progress report associated with the request for services, dated 02/18/14, identified subjective complaints of left knee pain. Objective findings included tenderness to palpation and a mild effusion of the knee. The diagnoses included degenerative joint disease; chondromalacia; and pain. He underwent arthroscopy of the left knee in 2003. Treatment had included physical therapy, Synvisc injections, and oral analgesics. A Utilization Review determination was rendered on 03/31/14 recommending non-certification of "Tramadol HCL 50mg #100 x 1".

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Tramadol HCL 50mg #100 x 1:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 13 Knee Complaints Page(s): 346, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Tramadol; Opioids, page(s) 74-96; 113 Page(s): 74-96; 113. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain, Opioids, specific drug list: Tramadol.

**Decision rationale:** Tramadol (Ultram) is a centrally acting synthetic opioid analgesic. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) Guidelines related to on-going treatment of opioids state that there should be documentation and ongoing review of pain relief, functional status, appropriate use, and side effects. Pain assessment should include: current pain; the least reported pain over the period since last assessment; average pain; intensity of pain after taking the opioid; how long it takes for pain relief; and how long pain relief lasts. A recent epidemiologic study found that opioid treatment for chronic non-malignant pain did not seem to fulfill any of the key outcome goals including pain relief, improved quality of life, and/or improved functional capacity (Eriksen 2006). The Guidelines further specifically state that tramadol is not recommended as a first-line oral analgesic. The MTUS further states that opioids are not recommended for more than 2 weeks for knee complaints. The patient has been on opioids in excess of 16 weeks. The documentation submitted lacked a number of the elements listed above, including the level of functional improvement afforded by the chronic opioid therapy in view of the recommendations to avoid long-term therapy; likewise, that other first-line oral analgesics have been tried and failed. Therefore, the record does not document the medical necessity for tramadol.