

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0203558		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	12/16/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/29/2011
<b>Decision Date:</b>	02/06/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	11/19/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	12/05/2014

### 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 Physical Medicine Rehab 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:

The patient is a 52 year old female with date of injury 04/29/11. The treating physician report dated 11/12/14 indicates that the patient presents with anxiety. The mental examination findings reveal that the patient has the ability to perform basic computations and apply abstract reasoning, does not have any indication of homicide/suicide ideation, and demonstrates appropriate judgment. (20) Prior treatment history includes medications. The current diagnoses are: 1. Anxiety 2. Stress The utilization review report dated 11/16/14 approved with modification the request for Lorazepam 1 MG Qty 90 for weaning purposes. The utilization review report dated 11/16/14 denied the request for Alprazolam 1 MG Qty 30 based on guidelines not supporting the medication.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Lorazepam 1 mg Qty 90:** Upheld

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

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Benzodiazepines Page(s): 24.

**Decision rationale:** The patient presents with anxiety. The current request is for Lorazepam 1 MG Qty 90. The treating physician states, "Lorazepam (1mg tabelet, 1 Tablet Oral three times daily, as needed, Taken starting 10/02/13. Active." (26) The MTUS guidelines state that benzodiazepines are "not recommended for long-term use because long-term efficacy is unproven and there is a risk of dependence. Tolerance to hypnotic effects develops rapidly. Tolerance to anxiolytic effects occurs within months and long-term use may actually increase anxiety. A more appropriate treatment for anxiety disorder is an antidepressant." In this case, the treating physician has documented that the patient has been on this medication since at least 10/02/13 and documented that the patient was prescribed Lorazepam during the 11/18/14 visit. Recommendation is for denial.

**Alprazolam 1 mg Qty 30:** Upheld

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

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Benzodiazepines Page(s): 24.

**Decision rationale:** The patient presents with anxiety. The current request is for Alprazolam 1 MG Qty 30. The treating physician states, "Patient is here for Xanax medication refill due to anxiety from workmans comp case from April 2012." Xanax (alprazolam) belongs to a group of drugs called benzodiazepines and is used to treat anxiety disorders, panic disorders and anxiety caused by depression. The MTUS guidelines state that benzodiazepines are "not recommended for long-term use because long-term efficacy is unproven and there is a risk of dependence. Tolerance to hypnotic effects develops rapidly. Tolerance to anxiolytic effects occurs within months and long-term use may actually increase anxiety. A more appropriate treatment for anxiety disorder is an antidepressant." In this case, the treating physician has documented that the patient has been on this medication since at least 02/08/13 (58) and MTUS only recommends this medication for short term use. Recommendation is for denial.