

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0100970		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	06/03/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	11/05/1991
<b>Decision Date:</b>	07/09/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	05/07/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	05/26/2015

### 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: Texas, California  
 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 66 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 11/5/91. The injured worker was diagnosed as having pain disorder associated with psychological factors and a general medical condition, severe major depression, and panic attacks without agoraphobia. Treatment to date has included psychiatric treatment and medication. Currently, the injured worker complains of difficulty with concentration, appetite disturbance, social withdrawal, excessive worry, stomach distress, muscle tension, anxiety, and panic attacks. The treating physician requested authorization for Ativan 2mg #120 and Restoril 30mg #30. Per the doctor's note dated 2/10/15 patient had complaints of anxiety, tension, irritability, depression, impaired memory and concentration. Physical examination revealed weak and slowly moving, dysphoric mood, and no smiling or laughing. The medication list includes Amitriptyline, lorazepam, Cymbalta/ Duloxetine, Simvastatin, Pioglitazone, Simvastatin. Patient has received an unspecified number of CBT visits for this injury

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Ativan 2 MG #120:** Overturned

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Mental Illness and Stress.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Benzodiazepines page 24 Official Disability Guidelines, current online version Pain chapter Benzodiazepines.

**Decision rationale:** Ativan 2 MG #120 is a benzodiazepine, an anti anxiety drug. According to MTUS guidelines Benzodiazepines are "Not recommended for long-term use because long-term efficacy is unproven and there is a risk of dependence. Most guidelines limit use to 4 weeks. Their range of actions includes sedative/hypnotic, anxiolytic, anticonvulsant, and muscle relaxant. Chronic benzodiazepines are the treatment of choice in very few conditions. Tolerance to hypnotic effects develops rapidly. Tolerance to anxiolytic effects occurs within months and long-term use may actually increase anxiety". The injured worker was diagnosed as having pain disorder associated with psychological factors and a general medical condition, severe major depression, and panic attacks without agoraphobia. Treatment to date has included psychiatric treatment and medication. Currently, the injured worker complains of difficulty with concentration, appetite disturbance, social withdrawal, excessive worry, stomach distress, muscle tension, anxiety, and panic attacks. Per the doctor's note dated 2/10/15 patient had complaints of anxiety, tension, irritability, depression, impaired memory and concentration. Physical examination revealed weak and slowly moving, dysphoric mood, and no smiling or laughing. The medication list includes Amitriptyline, lorazepam, Cymbalta/ Duloxetine. So the pt is already on antidepressants, SNRI- Duloxetine and a tricyclic antidepressant, Amitriptyline. Long term chronic use of benzodiazepines is not recommended. It may lead to dependence and does not alter coping mechanisms. However, in this patient due to the severe depression, anxiety and panic attacks, a short course of a benzodiazepine is deemed medically appropriate and necessary. The request for Ativan 2 MG #120 is deemed medically appropriate and necessary in this patient at this time for short term use. (When discontinuing benzodiazepines, it is recommended that it should be tapered over time according to the discretion of the treating provider to prevent withdrawal symptoms.)

**Restoril 30 MG #30:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Mental Illness and Stress.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines - Benzodiazepines page 24 Official Disability Guidelines, current online version Pain chapter Benzodiazepines.

**Decision rationale:** Restoril (temazepam) is a benzodiazepine used to treat insomnia symptoms. According to MTUS guidelines Benzodiazepines are "Not recommended for long-term use because long-term efficacy is unproven and there is a risk of dependence. Most guidelines limit use to 4 weeks. Their range of actions includes sedative/hypnotic, anxiolytic, anticonvulsant, and

muscle relaxant. Chronic benzodiazepines are the treatment of choice in very few conditions. Tolerance to hypnotic effects develops rapidly. Tolerance to anxiolytic effects occurs within months and long-term use may actually increase anxiety." Per the cited guidelines, "Benzodiazepines are a major cause of overdose, particularly as they act synergistically with other drugs such as opioids (mixed overdoses are often a cause of fatalities)". Tolerance to anticonvulsant and muscle relaxant effects occurs within weeks. Tolerance to lethal effects does not occur and a maintenance dose may approach a lethal dose as the therapeutic index increases. The best prevention for substance use disorders due to benzodiazepines is careful prescribing. (Baillargeon, 2003) (Ashton, 2005) (Dickinson, 2009) (Lader, 2009) Adults who use hypnotics, including benzodiazepines, have a greater than 3-fold increased risk for early death, according to results of a large matched cohort survival analysis. The risks associated with hypnotics outweigh any benefits of hypnotics, according to the authors. In 2010, hypnotics may have been associated with 320,000 to 507,000 excess deaths in the U.S. alone". The AGS updated Beers criteria for inappropriate medication use includes benzodiazepines. (AGS, 2012) Use of benzodiazepines to treat insomnia or anxiety may increase the risk for Alzheimer's disease (AD)". A detailed response of the prescribed Ativan 2 mg (which is also a benzodiazepine) on the anxiety or insomnia is not specified in the records provided. A detailed rationale for prescribing a second benzodiazepine in addition to the Ativan was not specified in the records provided. In addition the pt has also been prescribed amitriptyline which has a sedative effect. The effect of that medicine on the patient's insomnia symptoms were not specified in the records provided. Any trial of other measures for treatment of insomnia is not specified in the records provided. As mentioned above, prolonged use of anxiolytic may lead to dependence and does not alter stressors or the individual's coping mechanisms. The request for Restoril 30 MG #30 is not medically necessary or fully established in this patient. (When discontinuing benzodiazepines, it is recommended that it should be tapered over time according to the discretion of the treating provider to prevent withdrawal symptoms.)