

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0108635		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	06/15/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	08/24/2001
<b>Decision Date:</b>	07/22/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	05/20/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	06/05/2015

### 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: California, Arizona,  
Maryland Certification(s)/Specialty: Psychiatry

### 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 50 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 8/24/01 resulting in work place associated stress. The exact mechanism of injury is unclear. She is currently being evaluated to her stress related depression and anxiety. Medications are Wellbutrin, temazepam, alprazolam, hydrocodone, ibuprofen, lorazepam. These medications have enabled her to continue to function. Diagnoses include chronic anxiety; chronic depression; chronic insomnia; headache. Treatments to date include medications; relaxation techniques. In the progress note dated 5/14/15 the treating provider's plan of care includes alprazolam 0.5 mg.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Alprazolam 0.5mg #60 with 3 refills:** Upheld

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

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines  
Topic: Benzodiazepine, Weaning of medications Page(s): 24, 124.

**Decision rationale:** MTUS states: "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 action includes sedative/hypnotic, anxiolytic, anticonvulsant, and muscle relaxant. Chronic benzodiazepines are the treatment of choice in very few conditions. Upon review of the Primary Treating Physicians' Progress Reports, the injured worker has been receiving Alprazolam 0.5 mg twice daily on a non going basis with no documented plan of taper. The MTUS guidelines state that the use of benzodiazepines should be limited to 4 weeks. The request for a four month supply is excessive and thus the request for Alprazolam 0.5mg #60 with 3 refills is not medically necessary.