

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0131259		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	07/17/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	01/06/2015
<b>Decision Date:</b>	08/17/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	06/26/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	07/07/2015

### 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

Certification(s)/Specialty: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Pain Management

### 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 34-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 01/06/2015. The injured worker was noted to be moving housekeeping carts when he felt pain in his back and fell to the floor. On provider visit dated 04/28/2015 the injured worker has reported low back pain. On examination of the thoracic/lumbar spine there was tenderness noted over the bilateral paralumbar region from L2 through L5 and decreased range of motion was noted as well. The diagnoses have included lumbar neuritis/radiculitis and lumbar sprain/strain. Treatment to date has included physical therapy and Orphenadrine ER, Naproxen Sodium, Synthroid, Omeprazole and Lamisil. The injured worker was noted to be working on restricted duty. The provider requested Tramadol 50mg #100.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Tramadol 50mg #100:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Tramadol (Ultram).

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Tramadol, Opioid Medication Page(s): 75-80, 94.

**Decision rationale:** Tramadol is a centrally acting opioid agonist and also inhibits the reuptake of serotonin and norepinephrine. On July 2, 2014, the DEA published in the Federal Register the final rule placing tramadol into schedule IV of the Controlled Substances Act. This rule will become effective on August 18, 2014. The CPMTG specifies that this is a second line agent for neuropathic pain. Given its opioid agonist activity, it is subject to the opioid criteria specified on pages 76-80 of the CPMTG. With regard to this request, the California Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state the following about on-going management with opioids: "Four domains have been proposed as most relevant for ongoing monitoring of chronic pain patients on opioids: pain relief, side effects, physical and psychosocial functioning, and the occurrence of any potentially aberrant (or non-adherent) drug-related behaviors. These domains have been summarized as the '4 A's' (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug-taking behaviors). The monitoring of these outcomes over time should affect therapeutic decisions and provide a framework for documentation of the clinical use of these controlled drugs." Guidelines further recommend discontinuing opioids if there is no documentation of improvement in function and reduction in pain. In the progress reports available for review, the primary treating physician did not adequately document monitoring of the four domains. Improvement in function was not clearly outlined. This can include a reduction in work restrictions or significant gain in some aspect of the patient's activities. Furthermore, there was no discussion regarding possible aberrant drug-related behavior. There was no documentation of a signed opioid agreement, no indication that a periodic urine drug screen (UDS) was completed, and no recent CURES report was provided to confirm that the injured worker is only getting opioids from one practitioner. Instead, the progress notes from March and April 2015 simply state that naproxen and tramadol should be continued in the treatment plan without further specification as to the efficacy of medications prescribed. Based on the lack of documentation, medical necessity of this request cannot be established at this time. Although tramadol is not medically necessary at this time, it should not be abruptly halted, and the requesting provider should start a weaning schedule as he or she sees fit or supply the requisite monitoring documentation to continue this medication.