

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0146631		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	08/07/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	10/29/2011
<b>Decision Date:</b>	09/03/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	07/14/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	07/28/2015

### 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

### 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 45 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on October 29, 2011, incurring low back and left knee injuries after cumulative trauma. She was diagnosed with lumbar disc disease, lumbar stenosis and chondromalacia of the knee. She had a left knee surgical arthroscopic performed. She underwent a lumbar laminectomy and micro discectomy in December, 2011. Treatment included pain medications, muscle relaxants, proton pump inhibitor, anti-inflammatory drugs, sleep aides, neuropathic medications and topical analgesic patches, physical therapy, aqua therapy and activity restrictions. Currently, the injured worker complained of persistent chronic low back pain and left knee pain. Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the knee revealed a small joint effusion and spurring. Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the lumbar spine showed a left hemi laminectomy with disc extrusion and canal stenosis. The treatment plan that was requested for authorization included a prescription for Zolpidem Tartrate (Ambien).

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Zolpidem Tartrate (Ambien) 5mg Qty 15.00:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain (Chronic): Zolpidem (Ambien®), pages 877-878.

**Decision rationale:** Per the ODG, this non-benzodiazepines CNS depressant should not be used for prolonged periods of time and is the treatment of choice in very few conditions. The tolerance to hypnotic effects develops rapidly with anxiolytic effects occurring within months; limiting its use to 4 weeks as long-term use may actually increase anxiety. While sleeping pills, so-called minor tranquilizers, and anti-anxiety agents are commonly prescribed in chronic pain, pain specialists rarely, if ever, recommend them for long-term use. They can be habit-forming, and they may impair function and memory more than opioid pain relievers. There is also concern that they may increase pain and depression over the long-term. Submitted reports have not identified any clinical findings or specific sleep issues such as number of hours of sleep, difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep or how the use of this sedative/hypnotic has provided any functional improvement if any from treatment rendered. The reports have not demonstrated any clinical findings or confirmed diagnoses of sleep disorders to support its use for this chronic 2011 injury. There is no failed trial of behavioral interventions or conservative sleep hygiene approach towards functional restoration. The Zolpidem Trtrate (Ambien) 5mg Qty 15.00 is not medically necessary and appropriate.