

Case Number:	CM15-0163200		
Date Assigned:	08/31/2015	Date of Injury:	03/23/2009
Decision Date:	10/05/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/22/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/19/2015

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 53-year-old female who sustained an industrial injury on March 23, 2009 resulting in chronic right shoulder and neuropathic pain and, subsequent reports of hopelessness and anxiousness. Diagnoses include major depressive disorder and anxiety. Documented treatment has included psychotherapy and psychotropic medication. The injured worker reports frequent nightmares and problems sleeping due to anxiety symptoms and racing thoughts. The treating physician's plan of care includes Xanax 0.5 mg. Report of July 14, 2015 states she is disabled from work.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Xanax 0.5mg #30: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines 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 prescribed Xanax 0.5 mg daily on an ongoing basis for at least 6 months without any plan of taper. The guidelines state that the use of benzodiazepines should be limited to 4 weeks. Thus, the request for Xanax 0.5mg #30 is excessive and not medically necessary.