

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0164723		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/02/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	04/09/2007
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/05/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	07/21/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	08/21/2015

### 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: North Carolina

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 60 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 04-09-2007. She has reported injury to the neck and low back. The diagnoses have included lumbago; myalgia and myositis; degeneration of intervertebral disc; degeneration of cervical intervertebral disc; and degeneration of lumbar intervertebral disc. Treatment to date has included medications, diagnostics, aquatic therapy, physical therapy, and home exercise program. Medications have included Norco, Lyrica, Gabapentin, Suboxone, Lidoderm Patch, Naproxen, Trazodone, Miralax, Colace, and Omeprazole. A progress report from the treating physician, dated 07-01-2015, documented a follow-up visit with the injured worker. Currently, the injured worker complains of left-sided low back pain; her neck pain is stable; she has been having a different pain in the right side of her low back that radiates down the leg to the back of the knee and into her mid-calf for the past six weeks; the pain is sharp and stabbing; the pain is constant but variable intensity; interference with sleep is noted; aggravating factors of pain included bending, lifting, and reaching; alleviating factors include medication, stretching, lying down, and yoga; she continues to do her home exercise program; her walking has been limited due to the pain in the right side of her back; and Suboxone decreases her pain by 85%. Objective findings included in no acute distress; normal mood and affect; awake, alert, and oriented; and gait is wide-based and antalgic favoring the right. The treatment plan has included the request for Colace 100mg, 2 capsules by mouth every day #60 refills 5; Suboxone 2mg-0.5mg SL film, dissolve 1 film sublingually 5 times a day #150, refills 3; and Trazodone 50mg tablet, 2 tablets by mouth at bedtime #60 refills 5.

## IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Colace 100mg, 2 capsule by mouth every day #60 refills 5:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation [www.drugs.com](http://www.drugs.com).

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines opioids  
Page(s): 77.

**Decision rationale:** The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on opioid therapy states: (a) Intermittent pain: Start with a short-acting opioid trying one medication at a time. (b) Continuous pain: extended-release opioids are recommended. Patients on this modality may require a dose of "rescue" opioids. The need for extra opioid can be a guide to determine the sustained release dose required. (c) Only change 1 drug at a time. (d) Prophylactic treatment of constipation should be initiated. The patient is currently on opioid therapy. The use of constipation measures is advised per the California MTUS. The requested medication is used in the treatment of constipation. However the request is for 5 refills and the continued use of opioids is not indicated. Therefore the request is not medically necessary.

**Suboxone 2mg-0.5mg SL Film, dissolved 1 film SL 5 times a day #150, refills 3:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Buprenorphine.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines opioids  
Page(s): 76-84.

**Decision rationale:** The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on opioids states for ongoing management: On-Going Management. Actions Should Include: (a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed, and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy. (b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function. (c) Office: Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Pain assessment should include: current pain; the least reported pain over the period since last assessment; average pain; intensity of pain after taking the opioid; how long it takes for pain relief; and how long pain relief lasts. Satisfactory response to treatment may be indicated by the patient's decreased pain, increased level of function, or improved quality of life. Information from family members or other caregivers should be considered in determining the patient's response to treatment. The 4 A's for Ongoing Monitoring: 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. (Passik, 2000) (d) Home: To aid in pain and functioning assessment, the patient should be requested to keep a pain diary that includes entries such as pain triggers, and incidence of end-of-dose pain. It should be emphasized that using this diary will help in tailoring the opioid dose. This should not be a requirement for pain management. (e) Use of drug screening or inpatient treatment with issues of abuse, addiction, or poor pain control. (f) Documentation of misuse of medications (doctor-shopping, uncontrolled drug escalation, drug diversion). (g) Continuing review of overall situation with regard to non-opioid means of pain control. (h) Consideration of a consultation with a multidisciplinary pain clinic if doses of opioids are required beyond what is usually required for the condition or pain does not improve on opioids in 3 months. Consider a psych consult if there is evidence of depression, anxiety or irritability. Consider an addiction medicine consult if there is evidence of substance misuse. When to Continue Opioids: (a) If the patient has returned to work; (b) If the patient has improved functioning and pain (Washington, 2002) (Colorado, 2002) (Ontario, 2000) (VA/DoD, 2003) (Maddox-AAPM/APS, 1997) (Wisconsin, 2004) (Warfield, 2004). The long-term use of this medication class is not recommended per the California MTUS unless there documented evidence of benefit with measurable outcome measures and improvement in function. There is no documented significant decrease in objective pain measures such as VAS scores for significant periods of time. There are no objective measures of improvement of function. Therefore all criteria for the ongoing use of opioids have not been met and the request is not medically necessary.

**Trazodone 50mg tablet, 2 tablets by mouth at bedtime #60 refills 5: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines, Mental illness and stress.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) insomnia.

**Decision rationale:** The California MTUS and the ACOEM do not specifically address this medication. Per the official disability guidelines recommend pharmacological agents for insomnia only is used after careful evaluation of potential causes of sleep disturbance. Primary insomnia is usually addressed pharmacologically. Secondary insomnia may be treated with pharmacological and/or psychological measures. Pharmacological treatment consists of four main categories: Benzodiazepines, Non-benzodiazepines, Melatonin and melatonin receptor agonists and over the counter medications. Sedating antidepressants have also been used to treat insomnia however there is less evidence to support their use for insomnia, but they may be an option in patients with coexisting depression. The patient does not have the diagnosis of primary insomnia or depression. There is also no documentation of first line insomnia treatment options such as sleep hygiene measures. Therefore the request is not medically necessary.