

Case Number:	CM15-0165757		
Date Assigned:	09/03/2015	Date of Injury:	07/17/2009
Decision Date:	10/06/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/12/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/24/2015

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 49 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 7-17-09. He reported pain in his lower back. The injured worker was diagnosed as having post-lumbar laminectomy syndrome, right lower extremity radiculopathy and depression and anxiety. Treatment to date has included an EMG study on 4-21-10, several lumbar MRIs, psychiatric treatments and lumbar trigger point injections. Current medications include Norco, Dilaudid, Anaprox, Prilosec, Prozac and Valium. A review of physical findings (2-9-15 through 5-8-15), indicated decreased lumbar range of motion, a positive straight leg raise test bilaterally at 60 degrees and no documentation of anxiety or difficulty with sleep. On 7-2-15, the treating psychologist noted a Beck Anxiety Inventory score of 25. As of the PR2 dated 7-31-15, the injured worker reports ongoing pain in his lower back that radiates to the lower extremities and right hip pain. He rates his pain a 7 out of 10. Objective findings include lumbar flexion 45 degrees, extension 15 degrees and lateral bending 20 degrees bilaterally. The treating physician requested Xanax 0.5mg #60.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Xanax 0.5mg #60: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 66.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines benzodiazepines Page(s): 24.

Decision rationale: The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on benzodiazepines states: Benzodiazepines 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. Tolerance to hypnotic effects develops rapidly. Tolerance to anxiolytic effects occurs within months and long-term use may actually increase anxiety. A more appropriate treatment for anxiety disorder is an antidepressant. Tolerance to anticonvulsant and muscle relaxant effects occurs within weeks. (Baillargeon, 2003) (Ashton, 2005) The chronic long-term use of this class of medication is recommended in very few conditions per the California MTUS. There is no evidence however of failure of first line agent for the treatment of anxiety or insomnia in the provided documentation. For this reason, the request is not certified.