

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0167356		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/08/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	02/29/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/22/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	08/03/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	08/25/2015

### 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 65 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 09-20-2010. He has reported subsequent neck, back, left knee, bilateral upper extremity and bilateral lower extremity pain and was diagnosed with cervicalgia, lumbago, left knee pain, cervical and lumbar disc protrusions, lumbar stenosis, right rotator cuff tear, lumbar radiculitis and left knee internal derangement. MRI of the lumbar spine on 05-28-2015 showed grade 1 anterolisthesis at L5-S1, spondylotic changes and neural foraminal narrowing with 2-3 mm broad-based disc protrusions from L2-S1. MRI of the cervical spine on 05-21-2015 showed spondylotic changes and bilateral neural foraminal narrowing secondary to broad-based posterior disc protrusion and osteophyte formation at C2-T1. MRI of the right shoulder on 06-04-2015 showed complete tear of the supraspinatus tendon with 36 mm tendinous retraction and acromioclavicular osteoarthritis. Treatment to date has included oral pain medication and physical therapy. Documentation shows that Tramadol was prescribed since at least 05-06-2015. There was no documentation of significant pain relief or objective functional improvement with use of pain medication. In a progress note dated 06-23-2015, the injured worker reported frequent severe 8 out of 10 neck pain, constant severe 9 out of 10 lumbar and bilateral shoulder pain and constant severe 10 out of 10 left knee pain. Objective examination findings showed decreased range of motion of the cervical spine, lumbar spine, bilateral shoulder and left knee and painful range of motion in these areas. Work status was documented as temporarily totally disabled. A request for authorization of Tramadol HCL tab 100mg ER, days supply: 30 #30 was submitted. As per the utilization

review dated 08-03-2015, the request for Tramadol HCL tab 100mg ER, days supply: 30 #30 was non-certified.

### **IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES**

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

**Tramadol HCL tab 100mg ER, days supply: 30 #30:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment 2009, Section(s): Opioids for chronic pain.

**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 nonadherent) 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 nonopioid 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 improvement in VAS scores for significant periods of time. There are no objective measurements of improvement in function or activity specifically due to the medication. Therefore all criteria for the ongoing use of opioids have not been met and the request is not medically necessary.