

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0182937		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/23/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	07/16/1991
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/29/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	08/27/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	09/17/2015

### 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: Emergency Medicine

### 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 56-year-old female, with a reported date of injury of 07-16-1991. The diagnoses include bipolar disorder Type II, pain disorder associated with both psychological and general medical condition, and dysthymic disorder. Treatments and evaluation to date have included Tylenol, Abilify, Buspirone, Zolpidem, Alprazolam (since at least 02-2015), Ditropan, Cymbalta, Temazepam, Trazadone, Ultracet, and oral splints. The diagnostic studies to date have not been included in the medical records provided. The medical report dated 08-11-2015 indicates that the injured worker's chief complaint was depression. She reported trouble with her temporomandibular joint (TMJ) dysfunction. The injured worker rated her bilateral temporomandibular joint pain 6-8 out of 10. She also complained of sharp pain behind her eyes, light sensitivity, painful gums, vertigo, and headaches in the temporal areas of her head. The injured worker has painful teeth and described "stiffness" of her ears. She has facial muscle pain and tightness of the muscles in her cervical and thoracic regions. The injured worker reported that her mood was lower than it had been now that her pain from the TMJ was worsening. There were mornings when she woke up with a headache and that really pulled her mood down. The physical examination showed good eye contact, normal speech, a sad and depressed mood, congruent affect, organized and logical thought process, intact judgment, alert and oriented, and intact attention and concentration. It was noted that the injured worker's status was improving. The treatment plan included the continuation of medication management and psychotherapy. The request for authorization was dated 08-11-2015. The treating physician

requested Alprazolam 0.5mg. On 08-27-2015, Utilization Review (UR) modified the request for Alprazolam 0.5mg to Alprazolam 0.5mg #25.

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

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

#### **1 prescription of Alprazolam 0.5mg: 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): Benzodiazepines.

**Decision rationale:** Xanax is a benzodiazepine. As per MTUS Chronic pain guidelines is not recommended for long-term use. There is strong risk of dependence and tolerance develops rapidly. Review of records show that patient is chronically on this medication. UR has been approving decreasing doses for weaning purposes. The number of tablets was not provided in this request. This is an incomplete prescription request with no total number of tablets requested. Chronic use of Xanax is not recommended and is not medically necessary.