

Case Number:	CM15-0051936		
Date Assigned:	03/25/2015	Date of Injury:	02/25/2005
Decision Date:	05/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/05/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/19/2015

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 52 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 02/25/2005. Current diagnoses include thoracic outlet syndrome and upper extremity pain. Previous treatments included medication management, splints, and physical therapy. Report dated 02/23/2015 noted that the injured worker presented with complaints that included increased pain in the right shoulder and arm. Current medications include Ativan, buprenorphine, Lyrica, promethazine, tizanidine, and Zofran. Pain level was rated as 5 out of 10 on the visual analog scale (VAS). Physical examination was positive for abnormal findings. The treatment plan included prescription for Ativan, buprenorphine, Lyrica, promethazine, and tizanidine, and recheck in 30 days. Disputed treatments include Ativan.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Ativan: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Topic: 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 Ativan on an ongoing basis with no documented plan of taper. The MTUS guidelines state that the use of benzodiazepines should be limited to 4 weeks. The request also does not specify the dose or the quantity that is being requested for Ativan, Thus, the request for Ativan is excessive and not medically necessary.