

Case Number:	CM15-0084034		
Date Assigned:	05/06/2015	Date of Injury:	02/09/2001
Decision Date:	06/11/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/17/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/01/2015

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: Internal 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 62 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 02/09/11. Initial complaints and diagnoses are not available. Treatments to date include medications, hip injections, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, psychotherapy, and physical therapy. Diagnostic studies include MRIs. Current complaints include continued pain. Current diagnoses include severe psychiatric depression. In a progress note dated 04/08/15 the treating provider reports the plan of care as continued Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and medications including Diazepam, Pristiq, Trazadone, and Seroquel XR. The requested treatment is Diazepam.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Diazepam 5mg, #90: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Benzodiazepines Page(s): 23.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Benzodiazepines Page 24. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Pain (Chronic) Benzodiazepines.

Decision rationale: Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS) Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines (Page 24) indicate that 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. Tolerance to hypnotic effects develops rapidly. Tolerance to anxiolytic effects occurs within months and long-term use may actually increase anxiety. Tolerance to anticonvulsant and muscle relaxant effects occurs within weeks. ODG guidelines indicate that benzodiazepines are not recommended for long-term use, because long-term efficacy is unproven and there is a risk of psychological and physical dependence or frank addiction. Most guidelines limit use to 4 weeks. Benzodiazepines are a major cause of overdose, particularly as they act synergistically with other drugs such as opioids (mixed overdoses are often a cause of fatalities). Tolerance to hypnotic effects develops rapidly. Tolerance to anxiolytic effects occurs within months and long-term use may actually increase anxiety. The risks associated with hypnotics outweigh any benefits of hypnotics. Benzodiazepines are not recommended as first-line medications by ODG. Medical records document the long-term use of the benzodiazepine Valium (Diazepam). MTUS guidelines do not support the long-term use of benzodiazepines. ODG guidelines do not recommend the long-term use of benzodiazepines. Therefore the request for Valium is not supported. Therefore, the request for Diazepam (Valium) is not medically necessary.