

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0120134		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/16/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	07/09/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	11/10/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	07/11/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	07/30/2014

### 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. The expert reviewer is Board Certified in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, has a subspecialty in Pain Medicine, and is licensed to practice in California. 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

### CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

This is a patient with a date of injury of 7/9/12. A utilization review determination dated 7/11/14 recommends non-certification of psych testing and Xanax. 7/2/14 medical report identifies pain, stiffness, and weakness in the left shoulder and wrist as well as constipation, sleep issues, and "stress/anx/depr." On exam, there is tenderness, decreased ROM, and decreased strength.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Psych testing:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines psychological evaluations.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 100-102 of 127.

**Decision rationale:** Regarding the request for psych testing, Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that psychological evaluations are recommended. Psychological evaluations are generally accepted, well-established diagnostic procedures not only with selected using pain problems, but also with more widespread use in chronic pain populations. Diagnostic evaluations should distinguish between conditions that are pre-existing, aggravated by the current injury, or work related. Psychosocial evaluations should determine if further psychosocial interventions are

indicated. Within the documentation available for review, there is no specific description of the patient's psychological complaints/findings. Furthermore, a request for psych testing in nonspecific, as there are multiple psychological tests that may be performed and, unfortunately, there is no provision for modification of the current request to any specific type of testing. In light of the above issues, the currently requested psych testing is not medically necessary.

**Xanax #45:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Benzodiazepines.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 24 of 127.

**Decision rationale:** Regarding the request for Xanax (alprazolam), Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state the 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 anxiolytic effects occurs within months and long-term use may actually increase anxiety. A more appropriate treatment for anxiety disorder is an antidepressant." Within the documentation available for review, there is no documentation identifying any objective functional improvement as a result of the use of the medication and no rationale provided for long-term use of the medication despite the CA MTUS recommendation against long-term use. Benzodiazepines should not be abruptly discontinued, but unfortunately, there is no provision to modify the current request to allow tapering. In the absence of such documentation, the currently requested Xanax (alprazolam) is not medically necessary.