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| <b>Case Number:</b>   | CM14-0168520 |                              |            |
| <b>Date Assigned:</b> | 10/16/2014   | <b>Date of Injury:</b>       | 10/05/2012 |
| <b>Decision Date:</b> | 11/18/2014   | <b>UR Denial Date:</b>       | 09/22/2014 |
| <b>Priority:</b>      | Standard     | <b>Application Received:</b> | 10/13/2014 |

### 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 Anesthesiology, has a subspecialty in Pain Management 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:

According to the records made available for review, this is a 38-year-old male with a 10/5/12 date of injury. At the time (9/11/14) of request for authorization for Tramadol 50 mg #90 with 3 refills, there is documentation of subjective (increased low back pain radiating to bilateral lower extremities associated with numbness and tingling of bilateral feet) and objective (tenderness over the right lumbar paraspinal muscle and right gluteus, pain with range of motion, and decreased sensation in right lower extremity) findings, current diagnoses (lumbar sprain/strain and sciatica), and treatment to date (medications (including ongoing treatment with Diclofenac and Tramadol), chiropractic therapy, and acupuncture). There is no documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects; and of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications as a result of Tramadol use to date.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Tramadol 50 mg #90 with 3 refills:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids Page(s): 76. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG 2013, Tramadol

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines OPIOIDS  
Page(s): 74-80; 113.

**Decision rationale:** MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines identifies documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects; as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of Opioids. In addition, specifically regarding Tramadol, MTUS Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guideline identifies documentation of moderate to severe pain and Tramadol used as a second-line treatment (alone or in combination with first-line drugs), as criteria necessary to support the medical necessity of Tramadol. MTUS-Definitions identifies that any treatment intervention should not be continued in the absence of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications or medical services. Within the medical information available for review, there is documentation of diagnoses of lumbar sprain/strain and sciatica. In addition, given documentation of ongoing treatment with Tramadol and NSAID, there is documentation of Tramadol used as a second-line treatment (in combination with first-line drugs). However, there is no documentation that the prescriptions are from a single practitioner and are taken as directed; the lowest possible dose is being prescribed; and there will be ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. In addition, given documentation of ongoing treatment with Tramadol, there is no documentation of functional benefit or improvement as a reduction in work restrictions; an increase in activity tolerance; and/or a reduction in the use of medications as a result of Tramadol use to date. Therefore, based on guidelines and a review of the evidence, the request for Tramadol 50 mg #90 with 3 refills is not medically necessary.