

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0213497		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	12/31/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	06/28/2013
<b>Decision Date:</b>	02/24/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	11/24/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	12/20/2014

### 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. 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: New Jersey, Michigan, California  
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Neurology, Neuromuscular 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 patient is a 37-year-old man who sustained a work-related injury on June 28 2013. Subsequently, the patient developed a chronic back pain for which she was treated with pain medications and physical therapy and chiropractic treatment. The patient had an MRI lumbar spine on August 5, 2013 which demonstrated degenerative disc disease. The patient EMG nerve conduction of both lower extremities the performance on 2013 was normal. According to a progress report dated on April 3, 2014 and November 16, 2014, the patient was complaining of ongoing back pain radiating to right lower extremity. The patient physical examination demonstrated lumbar tenderness with reduced range of motion. The provider requested authorization for tramadol.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Tramadol 50mg QTY: 90:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Opioids, specific drug list; Opioids; Weaning of Medications Page(.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Tramadol Page(s): 113.

**Decision rationale:** According to MTUS guidelines, Ultram (Tramadol) is a synthetic opioid indicated for the pain management but not recommended as a first line oral analgesic. In addition and according to MTUS guidelines, ongoing use of opioids should follow specific rules:(a) Prescriptions from a single practitioner taken as directed, and all prescriptions from a single pharmacy.(b) The lowest possible dose should be prescribed to improve pain and function.(c) Office: Ongoing review and documentation of pain relief, functional status, appropriate medication use, and side effects. Four domains have been proposed as most relevant for ongoing monitoring of chronic pain patients on opioids: pain relief, side effects, physical and psychosocial functioning, and the occurrence of any potentially aberrant (or non-adherent) drug-related behaviors. These domains have been summarized as the "4 A's" (analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects, and aberrant drug taking behaviors). The monitoring of these outcomes over time should affect therapeutic decisions and provide a framework. There is no clear recent and objective documentation of pain and functional improvement in this patient with previous use of Tramadol. There is no clear documentation of compliance and UDS for previous use of tramadol. Therefore, the prescription of Tramadol 50mg QTY: 90 is not medically necessary.