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| <b>Case Number:</b>   | CM15-0111620 |                              |            |
| <b>Date Assigned:</b> | 06/18/2015   | <b>Date of Injury:</b>       | 01/07/2011 |
| <b>Decision Date:</b> | 07/16/2015   | <b>UR Denial Date:</b>       | 06/08/2015 |
| <b>Priority:</b>      | Standard     | <b>Application Received:</b> | 06/09/2015 |

### 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: New Jersey, Alabama, 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 injured worker is a 37-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 1/07/2011. He reported injury to his left hand while assembling boxes of cold carrots. An additional injury to his right hand/wrist was noted on 10/04/2012 due to repetitive work duties, with subsequent right carpal tunnel release and right third digit trigger finger release. The injured worker was diagnosed as having bilateral wrist pain, right de Quervain's tenosynovitis, right carpal tunnel syndrome, status post carpal tunnel release, and rule out chronic regional pain syndrome right hand/wrist. Treatment to date has included diagnostics, medications, left third digit trigger finger release, bracing, and physical therapy. Currently (6/02/2015), the injured worker complains of bilateral wrist/hand pain with 0% improvement reported. Urine toxicology was not noted and it was documented that there was no evidence of functional improvement with medication use, but good to excellent pain relief was provided, per supplemental report (6/08/2015). He reported pain, weakness, and spasms in the right wrist and forearm, with radiation to the elbow, numbness to the middle finger, and a cold sensation to the hand. Pain was rated 8/10. Left hand/arm pain was rated 0/10. He was also seeing a pain management physician. His medication was documented as Naproxen, Prilosec, Neurontin, and topical creams. On 5/19/2015, medication prescriptions included Tramadol. He was not working. The previous progress report (4/28/2015) noted an increase in Tramadol (for better pain control). Pain ratings appeared consistent.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Tramadol 50 mg #75 with 1 refill:** Upheld

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

**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. Although, Tramadol may be needed to help with the patient pain, there is no clear evidence of objective and recent functional and pain improvement from its previous use. There is no clear documentation of the efficacy/safety of previous use of tramadol. There is no recent evidence of objective monitoring of compliance of the patient with his medications. Therefore, the prescription of Tramadol 50mg #75 with 1 refill is not medically necessary.