

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0124167		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	07/08/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	06/14/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	08/10/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	06/12/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	06/27/2015

### 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, Texas, Florida

Certification(s)/Specialty: Anesthesiology, Pain Management, Hospice & Palliative 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 (IW) is a 33-year-old male who sustained an industrial injury on 06/14/2012. Diagnoses include left lumbar radiculopathy secondary to L5-S1 anterolisthesis with severe left foraminal narrowing. Previous treatments were not included in the documentation. According to the progress notes dated 12/9/14, the IW reported severe low back pain with lower extremity radicular pain, worse on the left. On examination, there was tenderness to the left lower lumbar spine. Straight leg raise was positive on the left. Left ankle jerk was absent and hypoesthesia was noted in the S1 distribution on the left. Left lumbar decompression at L5-S1 was planned. A request was made for Tramadol ER 100mg, #60.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Tramadol ER 100 mg, sixty count:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 116.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 44, 47, 75-79, 120 of 127.

**Decision rationale:** Regarding the request for Tramadol ER, California Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines state that Tramadol ER is an opiate pain medication. Due to high abuse potential, close follow-up is recommended with documentation of analgesic effect, objective functional improvement, side effects, and discussion regarding any aberrant use. Guidelines go on to recommend discontinuing opioids if there is no documentation of improved function and pain. Within the documentation available for review, there is no indication that the medication is improving the patient's function or pain (in terms of specific examples of functional improvement and percent reduction in pain or reduced NRS), no documentation regarding side effects, and no discussion regarding aberrant use. As such, there is no clear indication for ongoing use of the medication. Opioids should not be abruptly discontinued, but unfortunately, there is no provision to modify the current request to allow tapering. In light of the above issues, the currently requested Tramadol ER, is not medically necessary.