

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0127278		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	07/13/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	12/04/2001
<b>Decision Date:</b>	08/07/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	06/11/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	07/01/2015

### 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: North Carolina  
 Certification(s)/Specialty: Family Practice

### 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 61 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on December 4, 2001. Treatment to date has included lumbar spine surgery, and medications. An evaluation on March 2, 2015 revealed the injured worker reported improvement in her symptoms. Her current medication regimen includes Avinza and Klonopin. She reports that using her Avinza ER allows her to get sleep. Her evaluating physician notes that the injured worker had 360 degree instrumentation of her lumbosacral spine and has significant muscle irritation and spasms as a result. She uses Klonopin for relief of muscle spasms. On physical examination the injured worker has a normal gait and can heel walk and toe walk. Her lumbar spine range of motion including flexion, extension, lateral rotation and lateral bending is restricted by approximately 30%. She fatigues easily due to the strain on her spine. The diagnoses associated with the request include lumbosacral spine 360 degree instrumentation, muscle spasms due to irritation by the instrumentation, and myofascial pain syndrome. The treatment plan includes continuation of Klonopin 3-4 times per day for muscle spasm, Lidoderm patches, and Avinza.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Avinza 30mg ER #60:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Short Acting Opioids; Opioids, pain treatment agreement; Opioids.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines opioids Page(s): 76-84.

**Decision rationale:** The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on opioids states for ongoing management: On-Going Management. Actions Should Include: (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. Pain assessment should include: current pain; the least reported pain over the period since last assessment; average pain; intensity of pain after taking the opioid; how long it takes for pain relief; and how long pain relief lasts. Satisfactory response to treatment may be indicated by the patient's decreased pain, increased level of function, or improved quality of life. Information from family members or other caregivers should be considered in determining the patient's response to treatment. The 4 A's for Ongoing Monitoring: 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 for documentation of the clinical use of these controlled drugs. (Passik, 2000) (d) Home: To aid in pain and functioning assessment, the patient should be requested to keep a pain diary that includes entries such as pain triggers, and incidence of end-of-dose pain. It should be emphasized that using this diary will help in tailoring the opioid dose. This should not be a requirement for pain management. (e) Use of drug screening or inpatient treatment with issues of abuse, addiction, or poor pain control. (f) Documentation of misuse of medications (doctor-shopping, uncontrolled drug escalation, drug diversion). (g) Continuing review of overall situation with regard to nonopioid means of pain control. (h) Consideration of a consultation with a multidisciplinary pain clinic if doses of opioids are required beyond what is usually required for the condition or pain does not improve on opioids in 3 months. Consider a psych consult if there is evidence of depression, anxiety or irritability. Consider an addiction medicine consult if there is evidence of substance misuse. When to Continue Opioids: (a) If the patient has returned to work; (b) If the patient has improved functioning and pain. (Washington, 2002) (Colorado, 2002) (Ontario, 2000) (VA/DoD, 2003) (Maddox-AAPM/APS, 1997) (Wisconsin, 2004) (Warfield, 2004) The long-term use of this medication class is not recommended per the California MTUS unless there documented evidence of benefit with measurable outcome measures and improvement in function. There is no documented significant decrease in objective pain measures such as VAS scores for significant periods of time. There are no objective measures of improvement of function. Therefore all criteria for the ongoing use of opioids have not been met and the request is not medically necessary.

**Klonopin 0.5mg #120:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG), Benzodiazepines Medications.

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

**Decision rationale:** The California chronic pain medical treatment guidelines section on benzodiazepines states: Benzodiazepines 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. Their range of action includes sedative/hypnotic, anxiolytic, anticonvulsant, and muscle relaxant. Chronic benzodiazepines are the treatment of choice in very few conditions. Tolerance to hypnotic effects develops rapidly. 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. Tolerance to anticonvulsant and muscle relaxant effects occurs within weeks. (Baillargeon, 2003) (Ashton, 2005) The chronic long-term use of this class of medication is recommended in very few conditions per the California MTUS. There is no evidence however of failure of first line agent for the treatment of anxiety or insomnia in the provided documentation. For this reason, the request is not medically necessary.