

Case Number:	CM13-0034049		
Date Assigned:	12/06/2013	Date of Injury:	04/08/2012
Decision Date:	02/14/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/30/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/11/2013

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 Licensed in Chiropractic & Acupuncture 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:

Claimant is a 35 year old female who sustained a work related injury on 4/8/2012. Her primary diagnoses is lumbar sprain/strain. She has low back and gluteal pain that radiates down to her lower extremities. Prolonged sitting and bending forward make it worse. Prior treatment includes oral medications, acupuncture, and physical therapy. She has multi-level disc protrusions and annular tear at L4-L5 and severe protruding disc L5-S1 causing moderate spinal canal stenosis. Per a report on 3/1/2013, the physician reports that acupuncture is extremely helpful. Per a report on 1/18/2013, the physician reports that acupuncture helps decrease her overall pain on a daily basis. Per a PR-2 on 10/12/2013, the physician reports that acupuncture has been helpful. The total number of acupuncture sessions is unknown. The claimant remains on total temporary disability. According to her acupuncturist, her Oswestry score decreased from 54 to 42% from to 1/5/2013 to 4/2/2013.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Decision for Acupuncture two times a week for six weeks for lumbar spine: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: According to evidenced based guidelines. Further acupuncture after an initial trial is medically necessary based on functional improvement. Functional improvement is defined as a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living, a reduction in work restrictions, or a reduction of dependency on continued medical treatments or medications. It is unclear how many prior acupuncture visits were rendered. The claimant did make progress with her Oswestry score with acupuncture from January to April of 2013. However, it does not substantiate a request of 12 visits at a time. The requested 12 visits is not medically necessary and appropriate given the ambiguity of total visits and the limited functional improvement from prior acupuncture.