

Case Number:	CM13-0046275		
Date Assigned:	12/27/2013	Date of Injury:	04/25/2013
Decision Date:	04/18/2014	UR Denial Date:	10/18/2013
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/12/2013

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 Board Certified in Chiropractic and 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:

The injured worker is a 49 year old female who reported neck and low back pain from injury sustained on 04/25/13 while she was lifting a heavy box. MRI of the cervical spine revealed multilevel spinal stenosis as well as posterior disc desiccation at C4-C7. Patient was diagnosed with sprain of neck; lumbar/lumbosacral disc degeneration; cervical disc displacement; brachial neuritis; lumbosacral sprain; lumbosacral neuritis; neuralgia. Patient has been treated with medication, acupuncture, physical therapy and chiropractic. Per notes dated 08/28/13, patient complaints of cervical spine pain, right shoulder pain and tingling in the arm. Per notes "Patient has failed physical therapy, acupuncture and has cervical spinal stenosis". Per notes dated 10/09/13, patient reports right and left upper cervical radicular symptoms; timing is constant; severity is intense. There is no assessment in the provided medical records of functional efficacy with prior acupuncture visits. Patient hasn't had any long term symptomatic or functional relief with acupuncture care.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT FOR THE CERVICAL SPINE (10 SESSIONS): Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS- Section 9792.24.1 Acupuncture Medical treatment Guidelines page 8-9. "Acupuncture is used as an option when pain medication is reduced and not tolerated, it may be used as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation and/or surgical intervention to hasten functional recovery". "Time to produce function improvement: 3-6 treatments. 2) Frequency: 1-3 times per week. 3) Optimum duration: 1-2 months. Acupuncture treatments may be extended if functional improvement is documented". Patient has had prior acupuncture treatment. There is lack of evidence that prior acupuncture care was of any functional benefit. Per progress notes dated 08/28/13, "patient has failed physical therapy and acupuncture". Additional visits may be rendered if the patient has documented objective functional improvement. Per MTUS guidelines, Functional improvement means either a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions as measured during the history and physical exam. Per review of evidence and guidelines, 10 acupuncture treatments are not medically necessary.