

Case Number:	CM14-0130486		
Date Assigned:	08/20/2014	Date of Injury:	12/16/2013
Decision Date:	10/02/2014	UR Denial Date:	07/18/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/14/2014

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 Acupuncture, has a subspecialty in Addiction Detoxification and is licensed to practice in New York. 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 applicant is a female employee who has filed an industrial claim for multiple injuries including the right knee that occurred on 12/16/13. Mechanism of injury is unspecified in the records reviewed. Currently the patient complains of pain with limited range of motion. The treating physician requested ten sessions of acupuncture to treat her pain and swelling, and to reduce some of her symptoms. The applicant is "off-work" status to date. The applicant has multiple diagnoses consisting of multiple body parts including lumbar spine, cervical spine, and bilateral upper and lower extremities. Her treatment to date includes, but is not limited to, acupuncture, chiropractic, physical therapy, MRI's, functional capacity evaluation, home exercise program, and oral and topical pain and anti-inflammatory medications. In the utilization review report, dated 7/18/14, the UR determination did not approve the ten sessions of acupuncture indicating a lack of subjective and objective goals and response to prior treatment and the treating physician did not provide a clear rationale for the necessity of acupuncture. Therefore, the advisor recommended for non-certification.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture times 10: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guideline (ODG)

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Evaluating a request for additional acupuncture is based on the MTUS recommendations for acupuncture, which includes the definition of "functional improvement". The applicant received an initial round of acupuncture care of at least six visits approved based on these guidelines. Medical necessity for any further acupuncture treatments is in light of "functional improvement". After combing through provided medical records it is evident, the treating physician neglected to provide clinically significant improvement in the applicant's daily living or a reduction in work restrictions. To note, the applicant has been off work and her status did not change due to this course of treatment. Therefore, these additional ten sessions of acupuncture therapy is not medically necessary based on the lack of functional improvement, as defined by MTUS. Furthermore, if the current acupuncture prescription were to be considered an initial trial, the MTUS recommends 3-6 visits as time allowed to produce functional improvement, thus the request is not medically necessary.