

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0137089		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/05/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	07/24/2012
<b>Decision Date:</b>	09/26/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	08/18/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	08/25/2014

### 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 Board Certified in Psychology 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:

According to the records that were provided for this independent medical review, this patient is a 65 male who reported an industrial/occupational work-related injury that occurred on July 24, 2012 during the course of his employment as a correctional officer for the [REDACTED]. The location of his employment was at the [REDACTED] in the administrative segregation unit which is a lockup for the more problematic inmates where he started work in 1990. Beginning in July 2011 he started to experience significant anxiety and fear that prevented him from getting into work. He experienced symptoms of claustrophobia and an inability to get his equipment and start work, he became paralyzed by fear and anxiety. He became incapable of working and a flashback of a multitude of events such as inmate suicides, beatings, cuttings and other violent and disturbing events came flooding back into his mind. He requested a sick day and then went to urgent care. He was diagnosed with job-related stress and anxiety. He was prescribed effects or and Ativan and Xanax for acute anxiety. A treatment progress note from February 2014 shows his psychiatric diagnosis to be: Major Depression with a history of olfactory and visual hallucinations; and history of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. The psychological treatment history from 2012 through 2013 is unclear in terms of the number of sessions that he had attended as well as the progress that was made. In January 2014 an independent medical review (no copy provided ) overturned a request for three months of biweekly treatment. The patient attended of psychotherapy from April 21 to July 30, 2014 the treatment focused on systematic desensitization and increasing modulated expressive communication skills. Anger/agitated depression are still interfering with his interpersonal relationships. Diagnostic classification information from July 31, 2014 reflects the following diagnoses: depressive disorder NOS, moderate severity; Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. The patient has attended six day intensive treatment program for correctional officers

and police officers with posttraumatic stress disorder with good results. A request was made for 12 additional sessions of psychotherapy, the request was noncertified. Utilization review rationale for non-certification was provided and stated as: "the worker has a two year history of accepted psychological and physical injury and has been afforded extensive psychotherapy resulting in functional benefit. He is also completed the additional psychological input relapse prevention as recommended by the IMR. Thus no additional psychotherapy is warranted on industrial basis. This independent medical review will address a request to overturn that decision.

### **IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES**

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

#### **12 Sessions of Psychotherapy: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM), pages 105-127 and on The Official Disability Guidelines (ODG).

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Part Two Behavioral Interventions, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Page(s): 23-24. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Mental Illness and Stress Chapter, Topic: Psychotherapy Guidelines for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Depression, June 2014 update.

**Decision rationale:** According to the official disability guidelines treatment recommendations for severe or complicated posttraumatic stress disorder with depression patients who are making progress in treatment may have up to a maximum of 50 sessions or treatment lasting at least one year is recommended. At this juncture, it appears that the patient has had approximately two years of therapy and has also attended an intensive PTSD workshop. It is clear that the patient is making significant improvements based on these treatments as he was having hallucinations at one time and was much more anxious than he is now. Although he still remains with some residual symptoms of depression, anxiety, and interpersonal irritability/anger he appears to be getting close to or has already exceeded the maximum suggested guidelines for treatment. It's difficult to say exactly because the precise number of sessions was not provided. However after a two-year course of treatment, which would represent double the length of time recommended in the ODG, the medical necessity of additional treatment sessions was not established based on the dual criteria of symptomology and making additional functional improvements based on what is already been achieved. It is the finding of this independent medical review that additional sessions have already been awarded throughout most of 2014 and he has likely already learned most if not all of what he needs to know by this juncture. The request overturned the non-certification is not approved.