

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0155332		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/25/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	09/21/2010
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/27/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	08/25/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	09/23/2014

### 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 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 65 year old male who reported bilateral knee pain from injury sustained on 09/21/10. Mechanism of injury was not documented in the provided medical records. MRI dated 2011 revealed degenerative tear of the medial meniscus with arthritic changes of the medial compartment. X-rays of bilateral knees in October 2013 showed medial joint narrowing of both knees. Patient is diagnosed with internal derangement of knee and knee sprain/strain. Patient has been treated with medication and acupuncture. Patient is a candidate for arthroscopic surgery. Per medical notes dated 04/03/14, patient complains of bilateral knee pain rated at 8/10. Examination revealed tenderness to palpation of knee with decreased range of motion. Per medical notes dated 05/27/14, patient complains of continued knee pain. Provider is requesting additional acupuncture x 8 for right knee. There is no assessment in the provided medical records of functional efficacy with prior acupuncture visits. Medical reports reveal little evidence of significant changes or improvement in findings, revealing a patient who has not achieved significant objective functional improvement.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**8 Sessions of Acupuncture for the Right Knee (2x4): Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation ODG Acupuncture 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". The patient has had prior acupuncture treatment. The provider is requesting additional 8 acupuncture sessions for the right knee. The patient is a candidate for knee surgery. Per utilization review, the patient has had prior acupuncture sessions. There is no assessment in the provided medical records of functional efficacy with prior acupuncture visits. Medical reports reveal little evidence of significant changes or improvement in findings, revealing a patient who has not achieved significant objective functional improvement to warrant additional treatment. 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 or decrease in medication intake. Per review of evidence and guidelines, the request is not medically necessary.