

Case Number:	CM14-0167473		
Date Assigned:	10/14/2014	Date of Injury:	05/31/2013
Decision Date:	11/17/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/30/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/10/2014

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 Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, has a subspecialty in Pain Medicine 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:

This is a patient with a date of injury of 5/31/13. A utilization review determination dated 9/30/14 recommends modification of acupuncture from 12 sessions to 6 sessions. The medical records were reviewed. Medical report dated 8/28/14 identifies pain in the low back, left knee, ankle, and foot. On exam, there is tenderness, hypertonicity, and 4/5 left knee and ankle strength. Recommendations include medications, epidural steroid injection x 2, acupuncture, and a urine drug screen.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture treatment, for the lumbar spine, QTY: 12 sessions: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Regarding the request for acupuncture, California MTUS does support the use of acupuncture for chronic pain. Acupuncture is recommended to be used as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation and/or surgical intervention to hasten functional recovery. Additional use is supported when there is functional improvement documented, which is defined as "either a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work

restrictions... and a reduction in the dependency on continued medical treatment." A trial of up to 6 sessions is recommended, with up to 24 total sessions supported when there is ongoing evidence of functional improvement. Within the documentation available for review, there is no evidence of prior use of acupuncture and, as such, a trial of 6 sessions appears appropriate. However, the current request for 12 sessions exceeds the 6 visit trial recommended by guidelines and, unfortunately, there is no provision to modify the current request. In light of the above, the currently requested acupuncture is not medically necessary.