

Case Number:	CM14-0069437		
Date Assigned:	07/14/2014	Date of Injury:	01/17/2009
Decision Date:	08/11/2014	UR Denial Date:	05/08/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/14/2014

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 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:

The patient is a 50 year-old female (██████████) with a date of injury of 1/17/09. The patient sustained injury to her abdomen and psyche when she was stabbed in the abdomen while walking out to her car. The patient sustained this injury while working as a Probation Counselor for ██████████. In his 5/27/14 PR-2 report, treating psychiatrist, diagnosed the patient with Post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic and Major Depression, single episode. This diagnosis was further supported by the 4/29/14 diagnoses that included: (1) PTSD; (2) Major depression, mild; and (3) Panic disorder with agoraphobia.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Six (6) weekly psychotherapy sessions between 4/29/2014 and 4/29/2015: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 15 Stress Related Conditions Page(s): 400-401. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines: Mental Illness & Stress.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Mental Illness and Stress Chapter.

Decision rationale: The CA MTUS does not address the treatment of PTSD therefore, the Official Disability Guidelines regarding the cognitive treatment of PTSD will be used as reference for this case. Based on the review of the medical records, the claimant has completed an extensive amount of psychotherapy since her injury in 2009. It is noted that she initially participated in psychotherapy with a [REDACTED] beginning in February 2009. It is unknown how long this lasted. She then participated in weekly psychotherapy with [REDACTED] for almost one year beginning in April 2009. Following a discharge from [REDACTED] in January 2010, the claimant began psychotherapy with LCSW, [REDACTED]. These services lasted at least until July 2012. The claimant has most recently been treating with [REDACTED]. Records indicate that the claimant continues to experience some psychiatric symptoms despite her history of psychological services. It is unclear why there have not been changes to the treatment plan or treatment modalities given the lack of consistent progress/improvement. The ODG indicates that "extremely severe cases of combined depression and PTSD may require more sessions if documented that CBT is being done and progress is being made. Psychotherapy lasting for at least a year, or 50 sessions, is more effective than shorter-term psychotherapy for patients with complex mental disorders, according to a meta-analysis of 23 trials. Although short-term psychotherapy is effective for most individuals experiencing acute distress, short-term treatments are insufficient for many patients with multiple or chronic mental disorders or personality disorders." The claimant has far exceeded 50 sessions or one year of treatment. As a result, the request for additional sessions does not appear reasonable. As a result, the request for "Six (6) weekly psychotherapy sessions between 4/29/2014 and 4/29/2015" is not medically necessary.