

Case Number:	CM14-0180865		
Date Assigned:	11/05/2014	Date of Injury:	10/25/2009
Decision Date:	01/15/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/14/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	10/30/2014

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 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 38 year old female patient with pain complains of her neck and lower back. Diagnoses included sprain of the neck, lumbar disc displacement. Previous treatments included: oral medication, aquatic-physical therapy, and work modifications amongst others. As the patient continued symptomatic, a request for an acupuncture trial x12 was made on 09-26-14 by the PTP. The requested care was modified on 10-14-14 by the UR reviewer to approve six sessions and non-certifying six sessions. The reviewer rationale was "a trial of six acupuncture sessions is supported by the guidelines as medically and necessary, however additional sessions would require documentation of analgesic response, functional benefit and associated reduction in medication use".

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture 12 sessions: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: The records available do not document the use of prior acupuncture. Therefore, as the patient continued symptomatic, an acupuncture trial for pain management and

function improvement would have been reasonable and supported by the guidelines. The guidelines (MTUS) state that the number of acupuncture sessions to produce functional improvement is 3 to 6 visits. Also notes that additional acupuncture care would be based on the functional improvement(s) obtained and documented with the trial. As the PTP requested initially 12 acupuncture sessions which are significantly more than the number recommended by the guidelines without documenting any extraordinary circumstances, the request is seen as excessive, therefore, the request is not medically necessary.