

Case Number:	CM14-0196081		
Date Assigned:	12/04/2014	Date of Injury:	06/01/2001
Decision Date:	01/15/2015	UR Denial Date:	10/31/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	11/24/2014

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 54 y/o male patient with pain complains of bilateral shoulders and lower back. Diagnoses included status Post right Shoulder Replacement, Multiple Myeloma, Chronic Pain Syndrome. Previous treatments included: surgery (shoulder repair), oral medication, physical therapy, acupuncture (unknown number of a sessions completed, prior acupuncture gains were described as "helped reducing pain level") and work modifications amongst others. As the patient continued symptomatic, a request for additional acupuncture x12 was made on 10-24-14 by the PTP. The requested care was denied on 10-31-14 by the UR reviewer. The reviewer rationale was that prior acupuncture reports "do not demonstrate a reduction in pain medication, changes in functional status or change in objective measures related to prior acupuncture services".

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture x 12 visits: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: The guidelines note that the number of acupuncture sessions to produce functional improvement is 3 to 6. The same guidelines read that additional acupuncture care could be supported for medical necessity "if functional improvement is documented 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." After an unknown number of prior acupuncture sessions (reported as beneficial in reducing symptoms), the patient continues symptomatic, taking oral medication and no evidence of any sustained, significant, subjective complaints or objective functional improvement (quantifiable response to treatment) obtained with previous acupuncture was provided to support the reasonableness and necessity of the additional acupuncture requested. In addition the request is for acupuncture x12, number that exceeds significantly the guidelines without a medical reasoning to support such request. Therefore, the additional acupuncture x12 is not supported for medical necessity.