

Case Number:	CM14-0202478		
Date Assigned:	12/15/2014	Date of Injury:	09/30/2011
Decision Date:	02/04/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/10/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/03/2014

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 Psychologist (PHD, PSYD) 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 43 year old female who suffered an industrial related injury on 9/30/11. The treating physician's report dated 6/25/14 noted the injured worker was suffering from chronic knee, chronic ankle, and low back pain. The injured worker was also noted to have chronic regional pain syndrome in the left lower extremity and radicular lumbar pain. The injured worker was referred to a pain psychologist. The injured worker attended weekly sessions of psychotherapy and multidisciplinary pain rehabilitation including physical therapy, psychiatry, and occupational therapy. In regard to psychotherapy the injured worker had improvement in pain but her mood did not improve and it impaired her functioning. The injured worker was noted to have become depressed and angry, worsening the fear-avoidance dynamic especially in public situations. The injured worker was noted to have problems with paying attention, participating in conversation, getting along with others, and responding appropriately. Difficulty tolerating increased stimulation for the environment, stress, confusion, and aggressiveness were also noted. The injured worker was noted to have made good progress and 6 additional visits were recommended to increase her ability and tolerance to social interaction so she can return to work. The total number of visits attended to date is 27. On 11/10/14 the utilization review (UR) physician denied the request for an additional 6 pain psych visits. The UR physician noted the Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule guidelines limit behavioral interventions for chronic pain medical treatment to 10 visits over 6 weeks therefore, and additional 6 pain psych visits is not medically necessary.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Pain psych visits x 6: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Behavioral Interventions Page(s): 23.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Behavioral interventions Page(s): 23. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Mental Illness and Stress Chapter.

Decision rationale: The medical records indicate that the injured worker has completed a total of 27 psychotherapy sessions to help her address her orthopedic pain and subsequent psychiatric symptoms of depression and anxiety. The MTUS recommends a total of up to 10 psychotherapy sessions in the treatment of chronic pain. The ODG recommends a total of up to 20 psychotherapy sessions for the treatment of depression. Given that the injured worker has already completed a total of 27 psychotherapy sessions which exceed both recommendations, the request for an additional 6 psychotherapy sessions is excessive and not reasonable. As a result, the request for "Pain psych visits x 6" is not medically necessary.