

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0202649		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	12/15/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	07/01/2005
<b>Decision Date:</b>	04/03/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	11/28/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	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. 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/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:

State(s) of Licensure: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Psychologist

### 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 injured worker is a 58 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on July 1, 2005. Her diagnoses include generalized anxiety. She has been treated with psychotherapy and antidepressant medication. On November 18, 2014, her treating physician reports she was upset over how she is dealing with anger in her life. The physical exam revealed a flat affect, neutral to depressed mood, and good judgment and insight. The treatment plan includes assessment of her anger and providing support. On March 3, 2015, the treating psychologist reports she feels pain in her arms, legs, and back, which the pain along with anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) interfere with her daily functioning. She reports lashing out at times, isolating herself at other times, unable to sleep and function in her daily routines due to her anger and frustration from her pain. The treatment plan includes psychotherapy for post traumatic stress disorder. On November 28, 2014, Utilization Review non-certified a request for a psychotherapy evaluation, noting the lack of evidence of clearly psychiatric symptoms, insufficient objective documentation that is corroborated by any additional data and it is unclear if this psychological issue is an accepted part of the claim. The California Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS): Chronic Pain Medical Treatment Guidelines was cited.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**One psychotherapy evaluation:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines.

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Part 2, behavioral interventions, psychological evaluation Page(s): 100-101.

**Decision rationale:** According to the MTUS psychological evaluations are generally accepted, well-established diagnostic procedures not only with selective use in pain problems, but with more widespread use in chronic pain populations. Diagnostic evaluation should distinguish between conditions that are pre-existing, aggravated by the current injury or work-related. Psychosocial evaluations should determine if further psychosocial interventions are indicated. According to the official disability guidelines: psychometrics are very important in the evaluation of chronic complex pain problems, but there are some caveats. Not every patient with chronic pain needs to have a psychometric exam, only those with complex or confounding issues. Evaluation by a psychologist is often very useful and sometimes detrimental depending on the psychologist and the patient. Careful selection is needed. Psychometrics can be part of the physical examination, but in many instances this requires more time than it may be allocated to the examination. Also it should not be bundled into the payment but rather be reimbursed separately. There are many psychometric tests with many different purposes. There is no single test that can measure all the variables. Hence a battery from which the appropriate test can be selected is useful. Decision: The requested treatment, a psychological/psychosocial evaluation was not found to be medically necessary based on the documentation provided for this review. The patient suffered a repetitive motion injury that occurred over 9 years ago and has received psychological treatment for the injury and its related emotional sequelae. The amount of psychological treatment that she has received to date was not discussed as a part of this consideration for an evaluation but it is apparent based on the medical notes that she has been in treatment in November 2014 and again in January 2015. It is presumed that she has already had a psychological evaluation at some point prior to those dates which would've initiated the treatment and most likely she has been in psychological treatment for quite some time. Psychological assessment and evaluation is according to the MTUS a well-established accepted procedure. However in this case the patient's treatment is already underway and maybe reaching a point of conclusion. It is assumed that she has had prior psychological evaluations, if so, this information would be necessary in order to determine whether or not one would be indicated at this time. The justification and rationale for the medical necessity of a complex and lengthy evaluation at this juncture is unsupported and unclear. Because of these reasons, the medical necessity of the request is not established. Treatment progress notes are summarized in a report from February 6, 2015 noted sessions occurred in November 2014 in January 2015. The January 13, 2015 progress note indicates "flat affect with neutral to depressed mood and a request for 10 additional psychotherapy sessions to address anxiety/panic attacks and help her require skills to prevent their ongoing occurrence."