

Case Number:	CM14-0207392		
Date Assigned:	02/03/2015	Date of Injury:	09/08/2014
Decision Date:	03/24/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/03/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/11/2014

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: Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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 55 year old female, who sustained a work related injury on 9/8/14. The diagnoses have included cervical spine injury, bilateral shoulder internal derangement, bilateral medical epicondylitis, bilateral carpal syndrome, and medication induced gastritis. Treatments to date have included physical therapy, right elbow cortisone injection and acupuncture. In the Initial Comprehensive Medical Evaluation and Report dated 10/13/14, the injured worker complains of neck pain, bilateral shoulder pain, bilateral elbow-wrist and hand pain. She complains of occasional numbness over thumbs. She has tenderness to palpation of bilateral shoulders, elbows, wrists and hands. On 11/3/14, Utilization Review non-certified requests for physical therapy 2 x 4-cervical spine, bilateral shoulders and elbow and acupuncture 1 x 8 to cervical spine, bilateral shoulders and elbows. The California MTUS, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines, were cited.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Physical Therapy 2 x 4- cervical spine, bilateral shoulders, and elbow: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Physical Therapy guidelines, page 27

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Physical Therapy, pages 98-99.

Decision rationale: Physical therapy is considered medically necessary when the services require the judgment, knowledge, and skills of a qualified physical therapist due to the complexity and sophistication of the therapy and the physical condition of the patient. However, there is no clear measurable evidence of progress with the PT treatment already rendered including milestones of increased ROM, strength, and functional capacity. Review of submitted physician reports show no evidence of functional benefit, unchanged chronic symptom complaints, clinical findings, and functional status. There is no evidence documenting functional baseline with clear goals to be reached and the patient striving to reach those goals. The Chronic Pain Guidelines allow for visits of physical therapy with fading of treatment to an independent self-directed home program. It appears the employee has received significant therapy sessions without demonstrated evidence of functional improvement to allow for additional therapy treatments. There is no report of acute flare-up, new injuries, or change in symptom or clinical findings to support for formal PT in a patient that has been instructed on a home exercise program for this chronic injury. Submitted reports have not adequately demonstrated the indication to support further physical therapy when prior treatment rendered has not resulted in any functional benefit. The Physical Therapy 2 x 4- cervical spine, bilateral shoulders, and elbow is not medically necessary and appropriate.

Acupuncture 1 x 8 to cervical spine, bilateral shoulders, elbows,: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: MTUS, Acupuncture Guidelines recommend initial trial of conjunctive acupuncture visit of 3 to 6 treatment with further consideration upon evidence of objective functional improvement. Review indicated the patient has received prior sessions of acupuncture; however, submitted reports have not clearly demonstrated any functional benefit or pain relief derived from prior treatment and have not demonstrated medical indication to support for additional acupuncture sessions. The previous provider also had discontinued acupuncture noting lack of relief. There are no specific objective changes in clinical findings, no report of acute flare-up or new injuries, nor is there any decrease in medication usage from conservative treatments already rendered. The Acupuncture 1 x 8 to cervical spine, bilateral shoulders, elbows is not medically necessary and appropriate.