

Case Number:	CM14-0209763		
Date Assigned:	12/22/2014	Date of Injury:	07/11/2007
Decision Date:	02/11/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/24/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/15/2014

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 50 y/o female patient with pain complains of her neck and shoulders. Diagnoses included cervicalgia. Previous treatments included: oral medication, physical therapy, acupuncture (x12 were previously authorized) and work modifications amongst others. As the patient continued symptomatic, a request for additional acupuncture x8 was made on 11-13-14 by the PTP. The requested care was denied on 11-24-14 by the UR reviewer. The reviewer rationale was "there is no clear documentation of objective functional improvement with prior sessions; therefore additional acupuncture x8 is not supported for medical necessity".

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture 8 visits 2x4: 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 amount of acupuncture to produce functional improvement is 3 to 6 treatments. The same guidelines read extension of 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." Twelve prior acupuncture sessions were rendered with no evidence of any sustained, significant, objective functional improvement (quantifiable response to treatment) documented to support the reasonableness and necessity of the additional acupuncture requested. In addition the request is for acupuncture x8, number that exceeds the guidelines without a medical reasoning to support such request. Therefore, the additional acupuncture x8 is not supported for medical necessity.