

Case Number:	CM14-0210525		
Date Assigned:	12/23/2014	Date of Injury:	05/28/2001
Decision Date:	02/27/2015	UR Denial Date:	11/24/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/16/2014

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: Chiropractor, Oriental Medicine

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 73-year-old male who reported low back pain and neck pain from injury sustained on 05/28/01. Mechanism of injury is not documented in the provided medical records. There were no diagnostic imaging reports. Patient is diagnosed with lumbar sprain/strain (chronic). Patient has been treated with medication, physical therapy, and acupuncture. Per medical notes dated 11/07/14, patient is doing about the same but for recent flare of pain, he has no new injury and found acupuncture to be fairly beneficial. Provider requested 10 acupuncture treatments which were modified to 4 by the utilization review. Therefore, the Utilization Review decision was appealed for an Independent Medical Review. No other medical records were provided for the medical review.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture Visits QTY: 10.00: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines regarding Shoulder - Acute & Chronic, Acupuncture

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS- Section 9792.24.1 Acupuncture Medical treatment Guidelines page 8-9. "Acupuncture is used as an option when pain medication is reduced and not tolerated, it may be used as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation and/or surgical intervention to hasten functional recovery". "Time to produce function improvement: 3-6 treatments. 2) Frequency: 1-3 times per week. 3) Optimum duration: 1-2 months. Acupuncture treatments may be extended if functional improvement is documented". Patient has had prior acupuncture treatment. Per medical notes dated 11/07/14, patient is doing about the same but for recent flare of pain, he has no new injury and found acupuncture to be fairly beneficial. Provider requested 10 acupuncture treatments which were modified to 4 by the utilization review. There is no assessment in the provided medical records of functional efficacy with prior acupuncture visits. Medical reports reveal little evidence of significant changes or improvement in findings, revealing a patient who has not achieved significant objective functional improvement to warrant additional treatment. Additional visits may be rendered if the patient has documented objective functional improvement. Per MTUS guidelines, Functional improvement means either a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions as measured during the history and physical exam or decrease in medication intake. Requested visits exceed the quantity supported by cited guidelines. Per review of evidence and guidelines, 10 acupuncture treatments are not medically necessary.