

Case Number:	CM15-0008745		
Date Assigned:	01/26/2015	Date of Injury:	09/27/2013
Decision Date:	03/18/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/08/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	01/15/2015

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 26 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 09/27/2013. She has reported subsequent back pain and was diagnosed with lumbar sprain/strain and degenerative disc disease. Treatment to date has included oral pain medication, epidural injections, physical therapy and chiropractic therapy. In a progress note dated 11/25/2014, the injured worker was noted to have continued back pain that was rated as 7/10. Objective physical examination findings were notable for tenderness in the lumbosacral junction extending bilaterally along the pelvic crest, pain with flexion and pain in the lumbosacral area on the ipsilateral side with seated straight leg raise. The physician noted that 8 visits of acupuncture treatment were being requested to assist in the treatment of chronic pain disorder. On 12/08/2014, Utilization Review modified a request for acupuncture from 8 visits to 6 visits, noting that guidelines suggest an initial trial of 3-6 visits of acupuncture. MTUS guidelines for acupuncture were cited.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Outpatient Acupuncture 8 visits: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Patient has not had prior Acupuncture treatment. Provider requested initial trial of 8 acupuncture sessions which were modified to 6 by the utilization review. Per guidelines 3-6 treatments are supported for initial course of Acupuncture with evidence of functional improvement prior to consideration of additional care. Requested visits exceed the quantity of initial acupuncture visits supported by the cited guidelines. Additional visits may be rendered if the patient has documented objective functional improvement. MTUS- Definition 9792.20 (f) 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. Per guidelines and review of evidence, 8 Acupuncture visits are not medically necessary.