

Case Number:	CM15-0132662		
Date Assigned:	07/20/2015	Date of Injury:	03/29/2013
Decision Date:	08/17/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/19/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/09/2015

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 52-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 3/29/2013. The mechanism of injury is unknown. The injured worker was diagnosed as having, multi-level lumbar disc herniations with neural foraminal narrowing, lumbar facet arthropathy and lumbar stenosis. There is no record of a recent diagnostic study. Treatment to date has included 7 chiropractic care visits, 11 acupuncture visits, 18 physical therapy visits and medication management. In a progress note dated 2/20/2015, the injured worker complains of low back and bilateral leg pain. Physical examination showed diminished range of motion in the lumbar spine, myofascial tenderness and diminished sensation to the lumbar 5-sacral 1 dermatomes. The treating physician is requesting 24 sessions of acupuncture.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture 1x per week for 6 months (24 sessions): Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Patient has had prior acupuncture treatment. Provider requested additional 24 acupuncture sessions which were non-certified by the utilization review. Requested visits exceed the quantity supported by cited guidelines. 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. Furthermore, MTUS guidelines do not support acupuncture for maintenance care. Per review of evidence and guidelines, 24 acupuncture treatments are not medically necessary.