

Case Number:	CM15-0137673		
Date Assigned:	07/27/2015	Date of Injury:	10/24/2014
Decision Date:	08/25/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/30/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	07/16/2015

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 42 year old male who sustained an industrial injury on 10/24/14. Progress report dated 6/1/15 reports continued complaints of worsened right elbow pain with work activities. He has poor grip strength and notes that use of his right hand causes increased elbow pain. He has weakness in the right hand and elbow with pain rated 7-9/10. Diagnosis: right lateral epicondylitis with extensor forearm myofascial pain. Plan of care includes: modify work, discussed orthopedic surgeon's recommendations of physical therapy, cortisone injections, ice, heat and topical NSAIDs. Request acupuncture 6 treatments. Work status: remain off work on 6/2/15 for 3 weeks. Follow up in 3 weeks.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture for the right elbow-6 visits: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Per Utilization review, patient has been authorized acupuncture on 01/2015; it is unclear if the patient has been administered the authorized acupuncture. Provider requested additional 6 acupuncture sessions which were non-certified 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. Per review of evidence and guidelines, 6 acupuncture treatments are not medically necessary.