MAXIMUS Federal Services

Case Number:	CM15-0167639		
Date Assigned:	09/08/2015	Date of Injury:	01/12/2015
Decision Date:	10/07/2015	UR Denial Date:	07/29/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/25/2015

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 30 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 1-12-2015. He reported developing low back pain from lifting activity. The diagnoses included lumbosacral strain, multilevel lumbar degenerative disc disease, radiculopathy, and low back pain. Treatment to date has included activity modification, anti-inflammatory, Medrol dosepak, and physical therapy. Currently, he complains of increasing low back pain and muscle spasms. On 6-11-15, the physical examination documented decreased lumbar range of motion and muscle spasms. The plan of care included to follow up after a scheduled epidural steroid injection. The appeal requested to authorize eight acupuncture treatments.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture treatment, quantity: 8 sessions: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment 2007.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment 2007.

Decision rationale: It is unclear whether the claimant has had prior acupuncture. If this is a request for an initial trial, eight visits exceeds recommended guidelines. Evidenced based

guidelines recommend a trial of acupuncture for chronic pain, but a request for 8 visits exceeds the recommended guidelines of six or less. If functional improvement is documented, further acupuncture may be medically necessary. If this is a request for an initial trial, the provider should make a request within the recommended guidelines. If this is not a request for an initial trial, the provider should document functional improvement as a result of the completion of acupuncture. Also total amount completed visits should be submitted. Eight visits of acupuncture are not medically necessary.