

Case Number:	CM15-0028461		
Date Assigned:	02/20/2015	Date of Injury:	06/22/1991
Decision Date:	04/07/2015	UR Denial Date:	01/22/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	02/16/2015

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: Psychologist

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 65 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 6/22/1991. The diagnoses have included major depressive affective disorder, single episode, severe, without mention of psychotic behavior and pain disorder. Treatment to date has included surgical and conservative measures. Currently, the injured worker complains of his major mood disorder. His score on the Beck Depression Scale was improved by 3 points and his sleep pattern and concentration levels were reported to improve. He was able to increase his walking time without a cane, increased positive social interactions outside the home, and increased functional activities. He completed multiple individual psychotherapy sessions, per the progress reports, and felt he had benefited. An additional (6) monthly individual psychotherapy sessions were requested. On 1/22/2015, Utilization Review modified a request for 6 individual sessions of psychotherapy to 5 sessions of individual psychotherapy, citing the Official Disability Guidelines.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

6 Session of Individual Psychotherapy: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG); Psychotherapy Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: The Expert Reviewer did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines (ODG) Mental Illness and Stress Chapter, Cognitive therapy for depression; & APA PRACTICE GUIDELINE FOR THE Treatment of Patients With Major Depressive Disorder, Third Edition (2010) Maintenance phase (pg. 19).

Decision rationale: Based on the review of the medical records, the injured worker has been receiving treatment for his symptoms of depression for the past several years on a monthly basis with psychologist, [REDACTED]. In his January 2015 report, [REDACTED] indicated that the injured worker continues to struggle with his depressed mood and recommended an additional 6 monthly psychotherapy sessions. Although the injured worker is permanently disabled, the records need to indicate exactly how the maintenance sessions maintain the injured worker's stability. Additionally, maintenance psychotherapy tends to include a tapering of services as it is assumed the patient has developed the skills necessary to manage and reduce their psychiatric symptoms. It does not appear that there has been any tapering of services over the past couple of years from monthly to bimonthly, for example. As a result, the request for an additional 6 monthly psychotherapy sessions is not medically necessary. It is noted that the injured worker did receive a modified authorization for 5 monthly psychotherapy sessions in response to this request.