

Case Number:	CM15-0039513		
Date Assigned:	03/09/2015	Date of Injury:	11/06/2014
Decision Date:	04/21/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/13/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/02/2015

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 44 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on November 6, 2014. He has reported injury of the elbow. The diagnoses have included medical epicondylitis of elbow. Treatment to date has included physical therapy, 6 previously authorized acupuncture visits, bracing, and medications. Currently, the IW complains of moderate and worsening pain in the left elbow. He reports worsening discomfort with lifting heavy objects or twisting the wrist. Physical findings reveal tenderness of the left lateral epicondyle, and decreased strength of the left elbow. On February 13, 2015, Utilization Review non-certified acupuncture two times weekly for three weeks or three times weekly for two weeks, for a total of 6 visits. The Acupuncture guidelines were cited. On February 25, 2015, the injured worker submitted an application for IMR for review of acupuncture two times weekly for three weeks or three times weekly for two weeks, for a total of 6 visits.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture 2x3: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Patient has been authorized 6 prior acupuncture treatment. 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, 2x3 acupuncture treatments are not medically necessary.