

Case Number:	CM15-0042149		
Date Assigned:	03/12/2015	Date of Injury:	06/21/2012
Decision Date:	04/22/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/16/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/05/2015

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 33 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on June 21, 2012. She reported low back and neck injury. The injured worker was diagnosed as having cervical spine strain. Treatment to date has included acupuncture, home exercise program, chiropractic care, and medications. A January 27, 2015, acupuncture note indicates she has continued complaint of low back pain with radiation into the hips, and neck pain which she reports as having an improved range of motion, and decreased pain level, now rated 2/10 on a pain scale. She reports not taking pain medications. The treatment plan includes the request for acupuncture for the neck and low back, one time weekly for six weeks, and chiropractic care for the neck and low back, one time weekly for six weeks.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

6 acupuncture treatments for the neck and lower back: 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 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, additional 6 acupuncture treatments are not medically necessary.