

Case Number:	CM15-0051029		
Date Assigned:	04/10/2015	Date of Injury:	10/25/2011
Decision Date:	06/11/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/26/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/17/2015

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: Ohio

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 52 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on October 25, 2011. She has reported cervical pain and headache and has been diagnosed with cervical pain with upper extremity symptoms, low back pain with lower extremity symptoms, bilateral shoulder subacromial bursitis, and bilateral knee chondromalacia patella. Treatment has included medications, physical therapy, activity modification, stretching, TENS unit, home exercises, heat, and cold. Currently the injured worker had tenderness of the lumbar and cervical spine with limited range of motion and a positive straight leg raise to the right and left. The treatment request included acupuncture.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture 2 times a week for 6 weeks (12 sessions) for neck: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: MTUS acupuncture medical treatment guidelines state that acupuncture is used as an option pain medications reduced are not tolerated, may also be used as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation and/or surgical intervention to hasten functional recovery. Based on the file presented is not evident that the current medication regimen is being reduced or that it is not tolerated. Guidelines also note that a trial of 3 to 6 visits 1 to 3 times per week is adequate to produce functional improvement. Acupuncture treatments may be extended to functional improvement is documented. As the request 12 acupuncture visits far exceeds the recommendation of initial trial of 3 to 6 visits to produce functional improvement, the request for 12 acupuncture visits for the neck is not medically necessary.

Acupuncture 2 times a week for 6 weeks (12 sessions) for low back: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: MTUS acupuncture medical treatment guidelines state that acupuncture is used as an option pain medications reduced are not tolerated, may also be used as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation and/or surgical intervention to hasten functional recovery. Based on the file presented is not evident that the current medication regimen is being reduced or that it is not tolerated. Guidelines also note that a trial of 3 to 6 visits 1 to 3 times per week is adequate to produce functional improvement. Acupuncture treatments may be extended to functional improvement is documented. As the request 12 acupuncture visits far exceeds the recommendation of initial trial of 3 to 6 visits to produce functional improvement, the request for 12 acupuncture visits for the low back is not medically necessary.

Acupuncture 2 times a week for 6 weeks (12 sessions) for bilateral shoulders: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: MTUS acupuncture medical treatment guidelines state that acupuncture is used as an option pain medications reduced are not tolerated, may also be used as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation and/or surgical intervention to hasten functional recovery. Based on the file presented is not evident that the current medication regimen is being reduced or that it is not tolerated. Guidelines also note that a trial of 3 to 6 visits 1 to 3 times per week is adequate to produce functional improvement. Acupuncture treatments may be extended to functional improvement is documented. As the request 12 acupuncture visits far exceeds the recommendation of initial trial of 3 to 6 visits to produce functional improvement, the request for 12 acupuncture visits for the bilateral shoulders is not medically necessary.

Acupuncture 2 times a week for 6 weeks (12 sessions) for bilateral knees: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: MTUS acupuncture medical treatment guidelines state that acupuncture is used as an option pain medications reduced are not tolerated, may also be used as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation and/or surgical intervention to hasten functional recovery. Based on the file presented is not evident that the current medication regimen is being reduced or that it is not tolerated. Guidelines also note that a trial of 3 to 6 visits 1 to 3 times per week is adequate to produce functional improvement. Acupuncture treatments may be extended to functional improvement is documented. As the request 12 acupuncture visits far exceeds the recommendation of initial trial of 3 to 6 visits to produce functional improvement, the request for 12 acupuncture visits for the bilateral knees is not medically necessary.