

Case Number:	CM15-0053483		
Date Assigned:	03/26/2015	Date of Injury:	03/29/2009
Decision Date:	05/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	02/27/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	03/20/2015

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: 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 female who sustained an industrial injury on 3/29/09. The injured worker reported symptoms in the back and right knee. The injured worker was diagnosed as having degeneration of cervical intervertebral disc, brachial radiculitis, and spinal stenosis in cervical region, cervical spondylosis, and displacement of lumbar intervertebral disc. Treatments to date have included exercises and oral pain medication. Currently, the injured worker complains of pain in the back and right knee. The plan of care was for acupuncture treatment and a follow up appointment at a later date.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture treatment x10 sessions: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: The guidelines note that the amount of acupuncture to produce functional improvement is 3 to 6 treatments. The same guidelines read extension of acupuncture care could

be supported for medical necessity "if functional improvement is documented as either a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions and a reduction in the dependency on continued medical treatment." A referral for acupuncture continuation (x 8) dated 10-21-14 was included in the records, therefore this request is for additional acupuncture x 10. After an unknown number of prior acupuncture sessions (unreported benefits), no sustained, significant, objective functional improvement (quantifiable response to treatment) obtained with previous acupuncture was provided to support the reasonableness and necessity of the additional acupuncture requested. In addition, the request is for acupuncture x 10, number that exceeds significantly the guidelines without a medical reasoning to support such request. Therefore, the additional acupuncture is not medically necessary.