

Case Number:	CM15-0087181		
Date Assigned:	05/11/2015	Date of Injury:	10/24/2014
Decision Date:	06/17/2015	UR Denial Date:	04/11/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	05/07/2015

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 39-year-old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 10/24/14. He reported low back and right knee pain. The injured worker was diagnosed as having pain in the joint of the lower leg, lumbago, thoracic or lumbosacral neuritis or radiculitis, and contusion of the knee. Treatment to date has included 8 acupuncture treatments, chiropractic treatment, massage, infrared treatment, and medication such as Naproxen and Norco. A physician's report noted acupuncture treatment provided temporary pain relief and improvement in flexibility and muscle strength. Currently, the injured worker complains of low back pain that radiates to the buttock region and right knee pain. The treating physician requested authorization for 8 sessions of acupuncture.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

8 sessions of acupuncture: 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 8 acupuncture sessions which were non-certified by the utilization review. Requested visits exceed the quantity supported by cited guidelines. Medical records discuss improvement but not in a specific and verifiable manner consistent with the definition of functional improvement as stated in guidelines. The documentation fails to provide baseline of activities of daily living and examples of improvement in activities of daily living as result of acupuncture. 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, 8 acupuncture treatments are not medically necessary.