

Case Number:	CM14-0122086		
Date Assigned:	08/06/2014	Date of Injury:	10/09/2013
Decision Date:	09/26/2014	UR Denial Date:	07/14/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	08/01/2014

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. The expert reviewer is licensed in Chiropractic and Acupuncture and is licensed to practice in California. 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

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 37 year old female who reported neck, right shoulder and low back pain from injury sustained on 10/09/13 due to slip and fall. There were no diagnostic imaging reports. Patient is diagnosed with right shoulder arthropathy, lumbar disc disease, lumbar radicular symptoms and cervical disc disease. Patient has been treated with medication, physical therapy and cortisone injection. Per medical notes dated 01/23/14, patient reports that despite conservative therapy care, she still continues to have significant amount of pain in her low back. She denies any new radicular symptoms down into her leg. Pain is rated at 8-9/10. Per medical notes dated 07/03/14, patient complains of persistent right shoulder pain, low back pain with radiating pain in the left leg. A physical examination revealed restricted range of motion in the right shoulder and low back. Primary treating physician is requesting initial trial of 8 acupuncture treatments which exceeds the quantity recommended by guidelines.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

8 Acupuncture therapy sessions for the low back and right shoulder.: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 9 Shoulder Complaints, Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Per MTUS- Section 9792.24.1 Acupuncture Medical treatment Guidelines Page 8-9. "Acupuncture is used as an option when pain medication is reduced and not tolerated, it may be used as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation and/or surgical intervention to hasten functional recovery". "Time to produce function improvement: 3-6 treatments. 2) Frequency: 1-3 times per week. 3) Optimum duration: 1-2 months. Acupuncture treatments may be extended if functional improvement is documented". Patient has not had prior Acupuncture treatment. Per guidelines 3-6 treatments are supported for initial course of Acupuncture with evidence of functional improvement prior to consideration of additional care. Requested visits exceed the quantity of initial acupuncture visits supported by the cited guidelines. Additional visits may be rendered if the patient has documented objective functional improvement. MTUS- Definition 9792.20 (f) 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. Per guidelines and review of evidence, the 8 Acupuncture visits are not medically necessary.