

Case Number:	CM14-0160232		
Date Assigned:	10/03/2014	Date of Injury:	06/21/2011
Decision Date:	10/30/2014	UR Denial Date:	09/02/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/30/2014

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 a licensed Acupuncturist, and is licensed to practice in Florida. 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 patient is a year 56 old female who sustained an industrial injury on 6/21/11. The patient states that her injuries are due to cumulative trauma from performing her usual and customary duties as a deputy director of food services. She had been diagnosed with L/S Sprain/strain, Myospasms, and L/S Radiculopathy. She had previously received chiropractic care, PT, Aquatherapy and lumbar epidural injections. The documentation suggests that she received medication; however, the types are unknown. After reviewing the documentation provided, the records indicate that the patient has been receiving relief from her pain with the use of epidural injections. There is no indication that the patient is seeking PT or surgical intervention for her injuries. The documentation provided fails to demonstrate any clinical evidence for the requested 12 acupuncture sessions for the low back. The medical necessity has not been established.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture 2 x a week for six weeks for the lower back: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: The patient is a 56-year-old female who sustained an industrial injury on 6/21/11. The documentation suggests that the patient's' injuries are due to cumulative trauma as a result of performing her job responsibilities as a deputy director of food services. The patient sustained injuries to her low back, hands, wrists, shoulders and legs. She had previously received chiropractic care, PT, Aqua-therapy and lumbar epidural injections. The documentation suggests the patient is having relief from her pain from epidural injections. There is no indication that the patient is seeking PT or surgical intervention for her injuries. As per CA MTUS Acupuncture Medical Treatment Guidelines (9792.24.1) Acupuncture is used as an option when pain medication is reduced or not tolerated, it may be used as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation and/or surgical intervention to expedite functional recovery. Acupuncture treatments may be extended if functional improvement is documented as defined in Section 9792.20 CA MTUS Acupuncture Guidelines requires clinical evidence of functional improvement for additional care to be considered. CA Acupuncture Guidelines sited 9792.24.1 states that the time to produce significant improvement is 3-6 treatments. It also states that acupuncture may be extended if functional improvement is documented including significant improvement in activities of daily living, reduction of work restriction, and reduction of dependency on continued medical treatment. The current documentation does not provide information that the patient is seeking PT or surgical intervention for her injuries, and the objective findings from the providers are unknown. Therefore, the request for acupuncture treatments 12 sessions for the low back would not be medically necessary.