

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------------------|------------|
| Case Number: | CM14-0169491 | | |
| Date Assigned: | 10/17/2014 | Date of Injury: | 09/07/2005 |
| Decision Date: | 12/18/2014 | UR Denial Date: | 09/29/2014 |
| Priority: | Standard | Application Received: | 10/14/2014 |

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 Acupuncture 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 54-year-old female who sustained an industrial injury on 9/7/05. The injury is due to a fall. The patient has been diagnosed with Neck Pain, Cervical Radiculitis and Muscle Spasms. The following medications had been prescribed: Norco. The patient also received bilateral C4-5 facet blocks, right C5-6 selective nerve blocks and a cervical fusion. The patient has received PT and acupuncture for symptom flair ups. The documentation suggests that the previous treatments were beneficial to the patient; however functional improvement has not been documented. After reviewing the documentation provided, the records fail to demonstrate any clinical evidence of functional improvement with the prior course(s) of acupuncture treatment. The medical necessity for the requested 8 acupuncture sessions has not been established.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Continued Acupuncture for additional 8 sessions to the cervical neck area: 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 54-year-old female who sustained an industrial injury to her neck, due to a fall on 9/7/05. She underwent cervical fusion, cervical facets and cervical nerve

blocks. She was also prescribed medications. The records indicate the patient had PT and acupuncture treatments. The patient has had an unknown amount of acupuncture treatments and the subjective findings are symptom relief. The patient reported pain relief with prior acupuncture treatments; however, the records provided do not substantiate clinical support for continued acupuncture care. There is a lack of documentation of functional improvement. 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 cited, 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 received any benefit from the previous acupuncture sessions. Therefore, the request for 8 acupuncture treatments for the cervical/neck would not be medically necessary.