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| <b>Case Number:</b>   | CM14-0184742 |                              |            |
| <b>Date Assigned:</b> | 11/12/2014   | <b>Date of Injury:</b>       | 11/18/2009 |
| <b>Decision Date:</b> | 12/19/2014   | <b>UR Denial Date:</b>       | 10/14/2014 |
| <b>Priority:</b>      | Standard     | <b>Application Received:</b> | 11/06/2014 |

### 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, has a subspecialty in 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 53 year old male who reported low back and bilateral knee pain from injury sustained on 11/18/09. Mechanism of injury was not documented in the provided medical records. MRI of the right knee revealed tricompartmental osteoarthritis. Patient is diagnosed with right knee symptomatic arthritis, piriformis syndrome, right SI joint dysfunction, and lumbosacral radiculitis. Patient has been treated with medication, cortisone injection, physical therapy and acupuncture. Per medical notes dated 07/15/14, patient reports bilateral knee pain. Per medical notes dated 08/13/14, patient complains of flare-up of low back and leg pain over the several weeks. Symptoms began after a prolonged drive. Per medical notes dated 10/14/14, patient complains of bilateral knee pain, right knee is bothering him more. Examination revealed medial joint line tenderness along the patellofemoral joint. Provider requested additional acupuncture. There is no assessment in the provided medical records of functional efficacy with prior acupuncture visits. 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.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**12 sessions of Acupuncture:** Upheld

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not cite any medical evidence for its decision.

**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 had prior acupuncture treatment. Per medical notes dated 08/13/14, patient reported flare-up of low back and leg pain over the several weeks. Provider requested additional acupuncture treatment. There is no assessment in the provided medical records of functional efficacy with prior acupuncture visits. 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, the request for 12 Acupuncture Treatments are not medically necessary.