

Case Number:	CM14-0143875		
Date Assigned:	09/12/2014	Date of Injury:	12/06/2013
Decision Date:	01/02/2015	UR Denial Date:	08/19/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	09/05/2014

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 58 year old female who reported neck, shoulder and chest wall pain from injury sustained on 12/06/13. Mechanism of injury was not documented in the provided medical records. Patient is diagnosed with neck sprain, shoulder strain, trapezius muscle strain, left chest wall contusion. Patient has been treated with medication, physical therapy and acupuncture. Per medical notes dated 01/28/14, patient return for follow up; at this time there is no pain at left chest wall, no pain with breathing. She still has tightness in left posterior shoulder and left sided neck. Per medical notes dated 07/15/14, "patient has been approved for acupuncture, still waiting for appointment". She has some good days, some bad days, pain is described as aching. Objective findings revealed full range of motion of the cervical spine and shoulder without pain. The request is for additional 6 acupuncture treatments for left shoulder, neck and chest which was denied by the utilization reviewer on 08/19/14.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture two times a week for three weeks (2X3) for the left shoulder, neck and chest:
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 07/15/14, "patient has been approved for acupuncture, still waiting for appointment"; objective findings revealed full range of motion of the cervical spine and shoulder without pain. The request is for additional 6 acupuncture treatments for left shoulder, neck and chest. 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. There is no evidence that this patient exhibits significant functional loss and is unable to perform an independent, self-directed, home exercise program, rather than the continuation of skilled intervention. Per review of evidence and guidelines, additional 6 Acupuncture treatments are not medically necessary.