

Case Number:	CM15-0120826		
Date Assigned:	07/01/2015	Date of Injury:	01/14/2014
Decision Date:	08/04/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/17/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/22/2015

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. 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/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:

State(s) of Licensure: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Chiropractor, Oriental Medicine

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 51-year-old female who sustained an industrial injury on 1/14/2014 resulting in low back pain and decreased mobility. She is diagnosed with lumbago. Treatment has included chiropractic therapy; physical therapy; transforaminal steroid epidural injections; oral, transdermal and intramuscular medications; heat; and, ice. The injured worker reported that medication helps improve pain and ability to perform activities of daily living, but other treatments did not provide the same relief. She continues to present with constant pain and limited functionality. The treating physician's plan of care includes acupuncture for the lumbar spine, 2 visits per week for 4 weeks. She is working on modified duty.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Initial acupuncture for the lumbar spine (2x4): Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Provider requested initial trial of 2X4 acupuncture sessions, which were modified to 6 by the utilization review. 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, 8 Acupuncture visits are not medically necessary.