

Case Number:	CM15-0123805		
Date Assigned:	07/08/2015	Date of Injury:	02/21/2015
Decision Date:	08/05/2015	UR Denial Date:	06/06/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	06/26/2015

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 66 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 2/21/2015. He reported upper and lower back pain after falling onto his feet while descending a step ladder. The injured worker was initially diagnosed as having possible low back strain and advanced degenerative joint disease of the upper and lower back. Treatment to date has included diagnostics, modified work, physical therapy, and medications. Currently, the injured worker complains of low back pain, at times traveling to his lower extremities, and pain traveling to his right shoulder blade. He was presently not working and was taking "painkillers". Exam of the lumbar spine noted tenderness of the lumbosacral junction, bilateral sacroiliac joints, and buttocks, along with paravertebral muscle spasms. Range of motion was mildly decreased and sensation was intact and straight leg raise test was positive bilaterally. The impression noted was musculoligamentous strain of the thoracic and lumbar spine, strain of the bilateral sacroiliac joints, and multi-level degenerative disc disease of the lumbar spine. The treatment plan included acupuncture for the low back, 2x6.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture for the low back 2 times a week for 6 weeks, quantity: 12 sessions: 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 2X6 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, 2x6 Acupuncture visits are not medically necessary.