

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0124056		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	07/08/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	09/04/1998
<b>Decision Date:</b>	08/05/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	06/17/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	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 55 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 9/4/1998. Diagnoses have included chronic recurrent lower back pain and bulging of the L4-5 disc based on magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) from 11/15/2010. Treatment to date has included acupuncture and medication. According to the progress report dated 5/22/2015, the injured worker complained of back pain. Symptoms included stiffness, numbness and tenderness. The pain was rated 7/10. Physical exam revealed lumbar spine tenderness with smaller trigger points. Flexion was limited. It was noted that prior acupuncture was helpful. Authorization was requested for acupuncture twice a week for three weeks.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Acupuncture 2 times per week for 3 weeks:** 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:** Patient has had prior acupuncture treatment. Provider requested additional 2X3 acupuncture sessions which were non-certified by the utilization review. There is lack of evidence that prior acupuncture care was of any functional benefit. 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, 2x3 acupuncture treatments are not medically necessary.