

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0127218		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	07/13/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	02/24/2014
<b>Decision Date:</b>	08/07/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	06/22/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	07/01/2015

### 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:

This 56-year-old female sustained an industrial injury on 4/24/14. She subsequently reported neck and bilateral shoulder pain. Diagnoses include shoulder, arm and cervical spine sprain and strain. Treatments to date include modified work duty, physical therapy, acupuncture and prescription pain medications. The injured worker continues to experience neck and bilateral shoulder pain. Upon examination, there was tenderness over the cervical paraspinal muscles and spasm in the left superior trapezius. There is decreased and guarded range of motion. The treating physician made a request for Acupuncture treatment 2-x wk x 3 wks, cervical spine, and shoulders.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Acupuncture treatment 2 x wk x 3 wks, cervical spine, and shoulders:** Upheld

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

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

**Decision rationale:** Patient has had 18 prior acupuncture treatments. Provider requested additional 2X3 acupuncture sessions for cervical spine and shoulders which were non-certified by the utilization review. Medical records discuss improvement but not in a specific and verifiable manner consistent with the definition of functional improvement as stated in guidelines. The documentation fails to provide baseline of activities of daily living and examples of improvement in activities of daily living as result of acupuncture. 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.