

Case Number:	CM15-0066315		
Date Assigned:	04/14/2015	Date of Injury:	09/26/2003
Decision Date:	05/13/2015	UR Denial Date:	03/13/2015
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	04/07/2015

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 64 year old male, who sustained an industrial injury on 9/26/2003. The current diagnoses are status post lumbar surgery X 2 and left lower extremity flare up. According to the progress report dated 1/20/2015, the injured worker complains of low back pain with radiation to the lower extremity. The pain is rated 6-8/10 on a subjective pain scale. The current medications are Motrin and Naprosyn. Treatment to date has included medication management, X-rays, MRI studies, physical therapy, OrthoStim4 unit, home exercise program, lumbar epidural steroid injection, and surgical intervention. The plan of care includes Ultram, Anaprox, and 8 acupuncture sessions. He had 12 acupuncture sessions in 2012 and 6 more certified in March 2014. Per a PR-2 dated 1/31/12, the claimant has completed 6 acupuncture sessions and he is able to decrease medication use and decreased pain.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

8 Acupuncture Sessions: Upheld

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

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: According to evidenced based guidelines, further acupuncture after an initial trial is medically necessary based on functional improvement. Functional improvement is defined as a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living, a reduction in work restrictions, or a reduction of dependency on continued medical treatments or medications. The claimant has had prior acupuncture of unknown quantity and duration and had mild subjective benefits. However, the provider fails to document objective functional improvement associated with acupuncture treatment. Therefore further acupuncture is not medically necessary.