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| Case Number: | CM15-0071398 | | |
| Date Assigned: | 04/22/2015 | Date of Injury: | 09/22/2013 |
| Decision Date: | 05/20/2015 | UR Denial Date: | 04/02/2015 |
| Priority: | Standard | Application Received: | 04/15/2015 |

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: 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 22 year old female, who sustained an industrial injury on 09/22/2013. She reported an injury to her right middle finger. The injured worker is currently diagnosed as having pain in joint of the right hand and status post right middle finger tendon repair surgery. Treatment and diagnostics to date has included right middle finger surgery, physical therapy, and medications. In a progress note dated 02/26/2015, the injured worker presented with complaints of continuous stabbing dominant right middle finger pain with cramping and numbing sensation. The treating physician reported requesting authorization for acupuncture care for right hand middle finger.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture for the Right Middle Finger 2 x 6: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 11 Forearm, Wrist, and Hand Complaints, Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: In reviewing the records available, it does not appear that the patient has yet undergone an acupuncture trial. As the patient continued symptomatic despite previous care, an acupuncture trial for pain management and function improvement would have been reasonable and supported by the MTUS (guidelines). The guidelines note that the amount to produce functional improvement is 3-6 treatments. The same guidelines could support additional care based on the functional improvement obtained with the trial. As the provider requested initially 12 sessions, which is significantly more than the number recommended by the guidelines without documenting any extraordinary circumstances, the request is seen as excessive, therefore is not medically necessary.