

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM15-0077386		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	04/28/2015	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	07/01/2005
<b>Decision Date:</b>	06/05/2015	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	04/20/2015
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	04/23/2015

### 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: Psychologist

### 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 46 year old female who sustained an industrial injury on 07/01/05. Initial complaints and diagnoses are not available. Treatments to date include medications and psychotherapy, as well as left shoulder surgery and physical therapy. Diagnostic studies are not addressed. Current complaints include depression, anxiety, and low energy. Current diagnoses include depression, anxiety, insomnia, and chronic pain. In a progress note dated 03/13/15 the treating provider reports the plan of care as mediations including Effexor and trazadone, as well as psycho-education sessions for anxiety. The requested treatments include group psycho-therapy for anxiety.

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

**Group psycho-education times 6 sessions for anxiety: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** The Claims Administrator did not base their decision on the MTUS. Decision based on Non-MTUS Citation Official Disability Guidelines - Treatment for Workers' Compensation (ODG-TWC) 2015 web-based edition; California MTUS guidelines, web-based edition: [http://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/ch4\\_5sb1a5\\_5\\_2.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/ch4_5sb1a5_5_2.html).

**MAXIMUS guideline:** Decision based on MTUS ACOEM Chapter 15 Stress Related Conditions Page(s): 389.

**Decision rationale:** Decision: A request was made for group psycho-education times 6 sessions for anxiety, the request was non-certified by utilization review which offered a modification to allow for 2 sessions with the remaining 4 sessions non-certified. The rationale for the decision was stated as: "there has been passed therapy sessions with some improvement. I count eighteen (18) sessions this far in the UR records." This IMR will address a request to overturn that decision. The ACOEM guidelines state that patient education is a cornerstone of effective treatment. Patients may find it therapeutic to understand the mechanism and natural history of the stress reaction and that it is a normal occurrence when their resources are overwhelmed. Education also provides the framework to encourage the patient to enhance his or her coping skills, both acutely and in a preventative manner by regularly using stress management techniques. Physicians, ancillary providers, support groups, and patient-appropriate literature are all educational resources. However, the ACOEM guidelines are silent with regards to session quantity. The official disability guidelines (ODG) for psychotherapy suggest that for most patients the typical course of psychological treatment consists of an initial brief treatment trial followed by 13-20 sessions maximum. The utilization review correctly determined that the patient has received nearly the maximum number of sessions already to date and has benefited from them. It was estimated by UR that 18 sessions have been provided leaving to sessions remaining before the suggested maximum per official disability guidelines is reached. On the treatment progress note from April 28, 2015 it is noted that the patient has had 29 sessions of psychological treatment for depression and anxiety. Further suggesting that the patient has already received the maximum quantity recommended of psychological treatment for most patients. An exception is noted in the official disability guidelines that would allow for up to 50 sessions in cases of very severe major depression/PTSD. As best as could be determined by the medical records provided this would not apply in this case as symptoms are described and appear to fall in the more moderate range. Therefore, the utilization review decision is appropriate per ODG guidelines. The request is not medically necessary.