

<b>Case Number:</b>	CM14-0143351		
<b>Date Assigned:</b>	09/10/2014	<b>Date of Injury:</b>	09/14/2013
<b>Decision Date:</b>	10/06/2014	<b>UR Denial Date:</b>	09/02/2014
<b>Priority:</b>	Standard	<b>Application Received:</b>	09/04/2014

### 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. The expert reviewer is licensed in Acupuncture and is licensed to practice in California. 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/services. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

### 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 is a 36 y/o male patient with pain complains of lower back. Diagnoses included lumbar disc disease with radiculopathy. Previous treatments included: oral medication, chiropractic-physical therapy, acupuncture (x8, gains unreported) and work modifications amongst others. As the patient continued symptomatic, a request for additional acupuncture x8 was made by the PTP. The requested care was denied on 09-02-14 by the UR reviewer. The reviewer rationale was "the MTUS supports acupuncture as an adjunct to physical rehabilitation or when oral medication are reduced...there is no documentation that previous acupuncture gave the patient relief...".

### IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

#### **8 additional sessions of Acupuncture for the Lumbar Spine: Upheld**

**Claims Administrator guideline:** Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines, Chronic Pain Treatment Guidelines Page(s): 13.

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

**Decision rationale:** The guidelines note that the number of acupuncture sessions to produce functional improvement is 3 to 6. The same guidelines read extension of acupuncture care could be supported for medical necessity "if functional improvement is documented as either a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions

and a reduction in the dependency on continued medical treatment." After eight prior acupuncture sessions, no evidence of any sustained, significant, objective functional improvement (quantifiable response to treatment) was provided to support the reasonableness and necessity of the additional acupuncture requested. In addition the request is for acupuncture x8, number that exceeds the guidelines without a medical reasoning to support such request. Therefore, the additional acupuncture requested is not supported for medical necessity.