

Case Number:	CM14-0143477		
Date Assigned:	09/10/2014	Date of Injury:	10/25/2012
Decision Date:	10/06/2014	UR Denial Date:	08/06/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	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 Chiropractic and 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:

Claimant is a 61 year old female who sustained a work related injury on 10/25/2012. Per a PR-2 dated 8/15/14, the provider states that the subjective complaints remain the same. Her diagnoses are cervical sprain/strain, radiculopathy of the upper limbs, brachial neuritis, and lumbar sprain/strain. At least 7 acupuncture sessions were rendered from 7/30/2014 to 8/22/14. Per a Pr-2 dated 7/31/2014, the claimant reports good result with acupuncture in the neck and back. She is working full duty. Per a PR-2 dated 8/6/2014, the claimant has completed 7 acupuncture treatments that while temporarily helpful have not significantly resulted in any long term improvement. The provider request a more aggressive physical therapy program because she is not responding as expected with the recommended acupuncture treatment. She is released to modified duty. Per an acupuncture report on 8/15/14, the claimant had had 5 acupuncture visits and cervical range of motion had increased 10 degrees in flexion, and 8 degrees in lateral bending and lumbar spine range of motion had increased 2 degrees in lateral bending. There was no increase in sitting, sleep standing, or walking tolerance. Grip strength is illegible. GPI decreased from 5/10 to 4/10. Per a Pr-2 dated 8/28/2014, the claimant reports very good improvement in neck and low back. Acupuncture is very helpful. She is released to full duty. Other prior treatments include physical therapy, chiropractic, and medications.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

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

Acupuncture 1 times per week for 6 weeks for the cervical and lumbar spine: 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 visits after an initial trial are medically necessary based on documented functional improvement. "Functional improvement" means a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions, medication, or dependency on continued medical treatment. The claimant has had at least 7 acupuncture treatments with reported benefit. However the provider failed to document clinically significant functional improvement associated with the completion of her acupuncture visits. The claimant was already working full duty when she started acupuncture and actually went to modified duty during acupuncture treatment. An intermediate report stated acupuncture was not enough and requested more aggressive physical therapy. Another intermediate report stated minor gains in range of motion and pain reduction. However there were no improvements in any activities of daily living. Therefore further acupuncture is not medically necessary