

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

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In the Matter of PAMELA S. CRADDOCK and DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES, SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION, Fort Mitchell, KY

*Docket No. 02-2068; Submitted on the Record;  
Issued February 12, 2003*

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DECISION and ORDER

Before COLLEEN DUFFY KIKO, DAVID S. GERSON,  
MICHAEL E. GROOM

The issue is whether appellant has established an employment-related disability on or after June 18, 2001.

Appellant filed occupational disease (Form CA-2) claims on April 7 and October 12, 1995, alleging that repetitive job duties as a claims representative contributed to carpal tunnel syndrome. The Office of Workers' Compensation Programs accepted that appellant sustained bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome.

On January 27, 1998 appellant filed a Form CA-2, alleging that she sustained various injuries, including fibromyalgia, a cervical injury, migraine headaches and depression, as a result of her job duties. The Office accepted the claim for C3-4 disc herniation and aggravation of headaches. Appellant returned to work part time and resumed full-time work in December 1999.

On June 18, 2001 appellant filed a claim for compensation (Form CA-7), alleging disability from June 18, 2001. The record indicates that appellant returned to work on August 14, 2001; she continued to work intermittently.

By decision dated August 2, 2001, the Office denied the claim for compensation on the grounds that the medical evidence did not establish disability causally related to the accepted employment-related conditions. In a decision dated May 9, 2002, an Office hearing representative affirmed the prior decision.

The Board finds that appellant has not established an employment-related disability as of June 18, 2001.

In this case, appellant filed a Form CA-7 claim for compensation as of June 18, 2001. As appellant sought compensation benefits under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act,<sup>1</sup> she

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<sup>1</sup> 5 U.S.C. §§ 8101-8193.

has the burden of establishing that her disability for work for specific periods is causally related to the employment injury.<sup>2</sup>

Appellant submitted several reports from Dr. Shirley Welden, an internist. In a form report (CA-20) dated June 15, 2001, Dr. Welden diagnosed cervical disc disease with migraines and checked a box “yes” that it was causally related to employment. She indicated that appellant was totally disabled as of June 15, 2001. The checking of a box “yes” in a form report, without additional explanation or rationale, is insufficient to establish causal relationship.<sup>3</sup>

In a report dated July 16, 2001, Dr. Welden stated that on June 15, 2001 appellant had a worsening of her neck and arm pain and was unable to continue working. She indicated that appellant had pain with repetitive typing in her job. By report dated March 4, 2002, Dr. Welden stated that appellant had been experiencing severe neck, shoulder, arm and hand pain when seen in June 2001. She indicated that prior pain management techniques had not provided appellant sufficient pain relief and appellant was placed off work. Dr. Welden opined that appellant’s occupational disease was due to her job duties as a claims representative, and appellant was totally disabled as of June 15, 2001; her return to work in August 2001 was not based on medical improvement but on appellant’s financial need. In a report dated April 26, 2002, she stated that appellant’s job exacerbated her symptoms and in the spring of 2001 appellant sustained an acute exacerbation.

The Board finds that Dr. Welden’s reports do not provide a reasoned medical opinion with respect to an employment-related disability as of June 18, 2001. She does not provide a narrative report with a complete factual and medical background, a clear diagnosis and a reasoned medical opinion on causal relationship between a disabling condition as of June 18, 2001 and appellant’s federal employment. In the absence of such evidence, the Board finds that appellant did not meet her burden of proof in this case.

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<sup>2</sup> *Donald Leroy Ballard*, 43 ECAB 876 (1992).

<sup>3</sup> *See Barbara J. Williams*, 40 ECAB 649, 656 (1989).

The decisions of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs dated May 9, 2002 and August 2, 2001 are affirmed.

Dated, Washington, DC  
February 12, 2003

Colleen Duffy Kiko  
Member

David S. Gerson  
Alternate Member

Michael E. Groom  
Alternate Member