

PATRICIA H. FITZGERALD, Deputy Chief Judge
VALERIE D. EVANS-HARRELL, Alternate Judge
JAMES D. MCGINLEY, Alternate Judge

In an October 26, 2017 report, Dr. Stephen Fox, an emergency medicine specialist, noted that appellant had been treated in 2014 and 2015 for an employment-related left knee injury.³

By decision dated April 17, 2019, OWCP denied appellant's occupational disease claim finding that the medical evidence of record was insufficient to establish causal relationship between his diagnosed condition and the accepted factors of his federal employment.

On April 25, 2019 appellant, through counsel, requested an oral hearing before a representative of OWCP's Branch of Hearings and Review. A hearing was held on August 29, 2019.

By decision dated November 12, 2019, OWCP's hearing representative set aside the April 17, 2019 decision, finding that a conflict of medical opinion evidence existed with regard to the issue of causal relationship. The hearing representative remanded the case for OWCP to refer appellant for an impartial medical examination.

Following further development, by decision dated March 11, 2020, OWCP denied appellant's occupational disease claim. It accorded the special weight of the medical evidence to the February 20, 2020 opinion of the impartial medical examiner.

On March 24, 2020 appellant, through counsel, requested an oral hearing before a representative of OWCP's Branch of Hearings and Review. A hearing was held on July 9, 2020.

By decision dated August 28, 2020, OWCP's hearing representative affirmed OWCP's March 11, 2020 decision.

On October 23, 2020 and June 4, 2021 appellant, through counsel, requested reconsideration and submitted additional medical evidence.

By decisions dated January 21 and August 13, 2021, OWCP denied modification of its prior decision.

The Board, having duly considered the matter, finds that this case is not in posture for decision.

OWCP's procedures provide that cases should be administratively combined when correct adjudication of the issues depends on frequent cross-referencing between case files.⁴ For example, if a new injury case is reported for an employee who previously filed an injury claim for a similar condition or the same part of the body, doubling is required.

In the present claim, appellant alleged injuries to his left knee. He has a prior claim for a traumatic left knee injury under OWCP File No. xxxxxx340. However, evidence pertaining to that file is not part of the case record presented before the Board. For a full and fair adjudication, the case must be remanded to OWCP to administratively combine the current case record with

³ The record reflects that appellant previously filed a September 19, 2014 traumatic injury claim (Form CA-1) alleging a left knee sprain, under OWCP File No. xxxxxx340.

⁴ Federal (FECA) Procedure Manual, Part 2 -- Claims, *File Maintenance and Management*, Chapter 2.400.8c (February 2000); *M.M.*, Docket No. 21-1323 (issued April 27, 2022); *T.D.*, Docket No. 20-1119 (issued January 29, 2021); *R.R.*, Docket No. 19-0368 (issued November 26, 2019).

OWCP File No. xxxxxx340, so it can consider all relevant claim files and accompanying evidence in adjudicating appellant's current occupational disease claim. Following this and other such further development as deemed necessary, OWCP shall issue a *de novo* decision. Accordingly,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the August 13, 2021 decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs is set aside and the case is remanded for further proceedings consistent with this order of the Board.

Issued: February 16, 2023
Washington, DC

Patricia H. Fitzgerald, Deputy Chief Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

Valerie D. Evans-Harrell, Alternate Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

James D. McGinley, Alternate Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board