

On March 2, 2020 appellant filed a claim for compensation (Form CA-7) for a schedule award. By decision dated April 16, 2020, OWCP denied appellant's claim for a schedule award.

On April 24, 2020 appellant, through counsel, requested a telephonic hearing before a representative of OWCP's Branch of Hearings and Review, which was held on August 12, 2020. By summary decision dated August 21, 2020, OWCP's hearing representative set aside the April 16, 2020 decision and remanded the case for further medical development.

By *de novo* decision dated May 20, 2022, OWCP again denied appellant's claim for a schedule award. In its decision, it referenced "a contusion in 2002 and 2008."

On May 25, 2022 appellant, through counsel, requested a telephonic hearing before a representative of OWCP's Branch of Hearings and Review, which was held on August 18, 2022. By decision dated October 31, 2022, OWCP's hearing representative affirmed the May 20, 2022 decision.

The Board has duly considered the matter and concludes 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 files.³ 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.⁴ Herein, appellant filed a traumatic injury claim on December 31, 2002, assigned OWCP File No. xxxxxx801, which was accepted for left knee contusion and temporary aggravation of preexisting degenerative disc disease and is the claim presently before the Board. She subsequently filed two claims for left lower extremity conditions, assigned OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx515 and xxxxxx594.

For a full and fair adjudication, the case must be returned to OWCP to administratively combine the current case record, OWCP File No. xxxxxx801, with OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx515 and xxxxxx594, so it can review all appellant's relevant claim files in determining whether appellant has submitted sufficient evidence to establish that she sustained permanent impairment to a scheduled member due to an accepted condition. Following this and such further development as OWCP deems necessary, it shall issue a *de novo* decision. Accordingly,

³ Federal (FECA) Procedure Manual, Part 2 -- Claims, *File Maintenance and Management*, Chapter 2.400.8c (February 2000).

⁴ *Id.*; *S.G.*, Docket No. 21-0396 (issued September 27, 2021); *R.L.*, Docket No. 20-0901 (issued July 27, 2021); *M.E.*, Docket No. 21-0094 (issued May 27, 2021); *L.M.*, Docket No. 19-1490 (issued January 29, 2020); *L.H.*, Docket No 18-1777 (issued July 2, 2019).

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the October 31, 2022 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: July 17, 2023
Washington, DC

Alec J. Koromilas, Chief Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

Janice B. Askin, Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

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