United States Department of Labor
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

V.D., Appellant	)	
	)	**Docket No. 26-0649**
and	)	**Issued: September 30, 2026**
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, BARQUIST ARMY HEALTH CLINIC, FORT DETRICK, Frederick, MD, Employer	)	

Appearances:
Jordan D. Howlette, Esq., for the appellant[1]
Office of Solicitor, for the Director

Case Submitted on the Record

DECISION AND ORDER

Before:
ALEC J. KOROMILAS, Chief Judge
PATRICIA H. FITZGERALD, Deputy Chief Judge
VALERIE D. EVANS-HARRELL, Alternate Judge

JURISDICTION

On July 2, 2026, appellant, through counsel, filed a timely appeal from a January 13, 2026 merit decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP). Pursuant to the Federal Employees' Compensation Act[2] (FECA) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 501.2(c) and 501.3, the Board has jurisdiction over the merits of this case.

[1] In all cases in which a representative has been authorized in a matter before the Board, no claim for a fee for legal or other service performed on appeal before the Board is valid unless approved by the Board. 20 C.F.R. § 501.9(e). No contract for a stipulated fee or on a contingent fee basis will be approved by the Board. *Id.* An attorney or representative's collection of a fee without the Board's approval may constitute a misdemeanor, subject to fine or imprisonment for up to one year or both. *Id.*; *see also* 18 U.S.C. § 292. Demands for payment of fees to a representative, prior to approval by the Board, may be reported to appropriate authorities for investigation.

[2] 5 U.S.C. § 8101 *et seq.*

ISSUES

The issues are: (1) whether OWCP met its burden of proof to establish that appellant's accepted condition of adverse reaction to a purified protein derivative (PPD) skin test had resolved as of October 21, 2025; and (2) whether appellant met her burden of proof to establish continuing disability and/or residuals of her accepted adverse reaction to a PPD skin test, on or after October 21, 2025, causally related to her accepted July 10, 2019 employment injury.

FACTUAL HISTORY

On July 15, 2019 appellant, then a 50-year-old supervisory biologist, filed a traumatic injury claim (Form CA-1) alleging that on July 10, 2019 she experienced adverse reactions to a PPD test (tuberculin test) on her left arm while in the performance of duty.[3] She did not stop work.

In a development letter dated June 5, 2025, OWCP notified appellant of the deficiencies of her claim. It advised her of the type of medical evidence needed and allotted her 60 days to submit the necessary evidence.

In a follow-up letter dated July 15, 2025, OWCP advised appellant that it had conducted an interim review and the evidence remained insufficient to establish her claim. It noted that she had 60 days from the June 5, 2025 letter to submit the necessary evidence. OWCP further advised that if the necessary evidence was not received during this time, it would issue a decision based on the evidence contained in the record.

OWCP subsequently received medical evidence, including medical records dated July 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18, and 22, and October 23, 2019 from the employing establishment medical clinic. It indicated that appellant was diagnosed with conditions including nonspecific reaction to a tuberculin skin test without active tuberculosis and chronic pain syndrome.

In a November 21, 2019 progress note, Dr. Willie Yu, Board-certified in pain medicine and physical medicine and rehabilitation, examined appellant and diagnosed cervical radiculopathy and right shoulder, arm, and neck pain from reflex sympathetic dystrophy.

On August 28, 2025 OWCP referred appellant, a statement of accepted facts (SOAF), the medical record, and a series of questions to Dr. Jonathan Matz, Board-certified in internal medicine, allergy, and immunology, for a second opinion evaluation to determine whether the claimed work injury or factors of employment caused or contributed to a diagnosed medical condition.

In an October 8, 2025 progress report, Dr. Matz noted his review of the SOAF and appellant's history of injury and medical treatment. He reported normal findings on physical

[3] OWCP assigned the present claim OWCP File No. xxxxxx331. Appellant has a prior claim for a July 23, 2012 traumatic injury which OWCP assigned OWCP File No. xxxxxx829 and accepted for contact dermatitis due to drugs and medicines in contact with skin, right brachial plexus neuritis, and right shoulder myositis. OWCP administratively combined OWCP File Nos. xxxxxx331 and xxxxxx829, with the latter serving as the master file.

examination with the exception of decreased range of motion of the right arm and shoulder. Dr. Matz provided assessments of unspecified adverse effect of drug or medicament, initial encounter; and complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS) of right upper limb. He opined that the PPD test administered on July 10, 2019 directly caused the adverse reaction on appellant's left forearm. Dr. Matz advised that the PPD test did not aggravate or exacerbate a prior underlying condition although appellant had a positive test in 2012. He related that if someone had a positive test in the past, it usually remained positive for life. Dr. Matz determined that the diagnosed condition was temporary and that it had resolved by the end of August 2019. He further determined that appellant's CRPS of the right upper limb would likely cause disability from work, but that the condition was not related to the July 2019 PPD test. On October 13, 2025 Dr. Matz completed a work capacity evaluation (Form OWCP-5c) in which he related appellant's restrictions due to her CRPS condition.

By decision dated October 21, 2025, OWCP accepted the claim for adverse reaction to PPD test based on Dr. Matz' October 8, 2025 opinion. It advised appellant that no further benefits would be paid for the accepted diagnosis as of October 21, 2025.

On November 23, 2025, appellant, through counsel, requested an oral hearing before a representative of OWCP's Branch of Hearings and Review.

By decision dated December 1, 2025, OWCP denied appellant's request for an oral hearing, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 8124(b). It further exercised its discretion and determined that the issue in this case could equally well be addressed by a request for reconsideration before OWCP along with the submission of new evidence.

On December 30, 2025, appellant, through counsel, requested reconsideration of the October 21, 2025 decision. Counsel contended that Dr. Matz' report failed to discuss the full extent of appellant's injuries. He maintained that Dr. Matz' opinion that the accepted condition had completely resolved by August 2019 was contradicted by appellant's medical records and accompanying sworn affidavit.

In a sworn statement dated December 20, 2025, appellant recounted the history of the accepted July 10, 2019 employment injury and her symptoms following the accepted injury.

By decision dated January 13, 2026 decision, OWCP denied modification of the October 21, 2025 decision.

LEGAL PRECEDENT -- ISSUE 1

Once OWCP accepts a claim and pays compensation, it has the burden of proof to justify modification or termination of an employee's benefits.[4] After it has determined that, an employee has disability causally related to his or her federal employment, it may not terminate compensation without establishing that the disability has ceased or that it is no longer related to

[4] *C.F.,* Docket No. 21-0003 (issued January 21, 2022); *J.T.,* Docket No. 19-1723 (issued August 24, 2020); *S.P.,* Docket No. 19-0196 (issued June 24, 2020); *S.F.,* 59 ECAB 642 (2008); *Kelly Y. Simpson,* 57 ECAB 197 (2005); *Paul L. Stewart,* 54 ECAB 824 (2003).

the employment.[5] OWCP's burden of proof includes the necessity of furnishing rationalized medical opinion evidence based on a proper factual and medical background.[6] The right to medical benefits for an accepted condition is not limited to the period of entitlement for disability.[7] To terminate authorization for medical treatment, OWCP must establish that appellant no longer has residuals of an employment-related condition, which would require further medical treatment.[8]

ANALYSIS -- ISSUE 1

The Board finds that OWCP met its burden of proof to establish that appellant's accepted condition of adverse reaction to a PPD skin test had resolved as of October 21, 2025.

In his October 8, 2025 progress note, Dr. Matz, OWCP's second opinion physician, noted a history of the accepted July 10, 2019 employment injury, discussed his examination findings, and provided assessments of unspecified adverse effect of drug or medicament, initial encounter; and CRPS of right upper limb. He opined however, that appellant's accepted adverse reaction to the July 10, 2019 PPD test had resolved. Dr. Matz noted essentially normal findings on physical examination. He further noted that appellant was likely disabled from work due to her CRPS of the right upper limb, which was not related to the July 10, 2019 employment injury.

Dr. Matz provided a well-rationalized opinion based on an accurate factual and medical history and detailed findings on examination.[9] Thus, his October 8, 2025 report represents the weight of the medical evidence in finding that appellant's accepted condition of adverse reaction to a PPD test had resolved.[10] Accordingly, the Board finds that OWCP met its burden of proof.

LEGAL PRECEDENT -- ISSUE 2

Once OWCP properly terminates a claimant's compensation benefits, the burden shifts to appellant to establish continuing disability or residuals after that date causally related to the

[5] *S.P.,* Docket No. 22-0393 (issued August 26, 2022); *A.T.,* Docket No. 20-0334 (issued October 8, 2020); *E.B.,* Docket No. 18-1060 (issued November 1, 2018).

[6] *S.P., id.*; *C.R.,* Docket No. 19-1132 (issued October 1, 2020); *G.H.,* Docket No. 18-0414 (issued November 14, 2018).

[7] *S.P., id.*; *E.J.,* Docket No. 20-0013 (issued November 19, 2020); *L.W.,* Docket No. 18-1372 (issued February 27, 2019).

[8] *C.F.*, *supra* note 4; *M.E.,* Docket No. 20-0877 (issued August 17, 2021); *L.S.,* Docket No. 19-0959 (issued September 24, 2019); *R.P.,* Docket No. 18-0900 (issued February 5, 2019).

[9] *See T.W.,* Docket No. 26-0237 (issued July 17, 2026); *L.P.,* Docket No. 24-0440 (issued February 13, 2026); *M.T.,* Docket No. 25-0305 (issued May 7, 2025); *I.S.,* Docket No. 25-0093 (issued March 14, 2025); *M.R.,* Docket No. 23-1052 (issued March 5, 2024); *S.V.,* Docket No. 23-0474 (issued August 1, 2023); *J.S.,* Docket No. 22-1388 (issued April 4, 2023); *J.S.,* Docket No. 20-1409 (issued September 1, 2021).

[10] *T.W., id.*; *L.P., id.*; *M.T., id.*; *I.S.*; *id.*; *H.J.,* Docket No. 24-0879 (issued October 29, 2024); *M.H.,* Docket No. 24-0470 (issued July 25, 2024); *R.P.,* Docket No. 20-0891 (issued September 20, 2021); *N.G.,* Docket No. 18-1340 (issued March 6, 2019); *A.F.,* Docket No. 16-0393 (issued June 24, 2016).

accepted injury.[11] To establish causal relationship between the condition as well as any attendant disability claimed and the employment injury, an employee must submit rationalized medical evidence based on a complete medical and factual background, supporting such causal relationship.[12] A claimant must establish by the weight of the reliable, probative, and substantial evidence that he or she had an employment-related disability which continued after termination of compensation benefits.[13]

ANALYSIS -- ISSUE 2

The Board finds that appellant has not met her burden of proof to establish continuing disability and/or residuals of her accepted adverse reaction to a PPD skin test, on or after October 21, 2025, causally related to her accepted July 10, 2019 employment injury.

On December 30, 2025, appellant, through counsel, requested reconsideration of the October 21, 2025 decision. Counsel contended that Dr. Matz' report failed to discuss the full extent of appellant's injuries. He maintained that Dr. Matz' opinion that the accepted condition had completely resolved by August 2019 was contradicted by appellant's medical records and accompanying sworn affidavit. In support thereof, appellant submitted a sworn statement dated December 20, 2025, wherein she recounted the history of the accepted July 10, 2019 employment injury and her symptoms following the accepted injury. However, the underlying merit issue is medical in nature.[14] No additional medical evidence was received. Thus, this evidence is insufficient to establish continuing disability and/or residuals on or after October 21, 2025, causally related to the accepted July 10, 2019 employment injury.[15]

As the medical evidence of record is insufficient to establish continuing disability and/or residuals of the accepted adverse reaction to a PPD skin test, on or after October 21, 2025, causally related to her accepted July 10, 2019 employment injury, the Board finds that appellant has not met her burden of proof.

Appellant may submit new evidence or argument with a written request for reconsideration to OWCP within one year of this merit decision, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 8128(a) and 20 C.F.R. §§ 10.605 through 10.607.

---

[11] *See V.W.*, Docket No. 19-0645 (issued February 22, 2021); *S.M.*, Docket No. 18-0673 (issued January 25, 2019); *J.R.*, Docket No. 17-1352 (issued August 13, 2018); *George Servetas*, 43 ECAB 424, 430 (1992).

[12] *See O.W.*, Docket No. 20-1343 (issued August 16, 2022); *L.S.*, Docket No., 20-0570 (issued December 15, 2020); *James Mack*, 43 ECAB 321 (1991).

[13] *J.N.*, Docket No. 20-1030 (issued November 20, 2020); *S.F.*, Docket No. 17-1427 (issued May 16, 2018).

[14] *See J.F.*, Docket No. 22-0420 (issued July 19, 2022).

[15] *See T.W.,* Docket No. 26-0237 (issued July 17, 2026); *R.A.*, Docket No. 26-0062 (issued May 1, 2026).

CONCLUSION

The Board finds that OWCP met its burden of proof to establish that appellant's accepted condition of adverse reaction to a PPD skin test had resolved as of October 21, 2025. The Board further finds that appellant has not met her burden of proof to establish continuing disability and/or residuals of her accepted adverse reaction to a PPD skin test, on or after October 21, 2025, causally related to her accepted July 10, 2019 employment injury.

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the January 13, 2026 decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs is affirmed.

Issued: September 30, 2026
Washington, DC

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

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

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