

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEALS BOARD
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

MARIA HERNANDEZ, *Applicant*

vs.

**PRIME HEALTHCARE SERVICES
(DESERT VALLEY HOSPITAL);
SAFETY NATIONAL CASUALTY,
administered by AMERICAN CLAIMS, *Defendants***

**Adjudication Number: ADJ12727611
San Bernardino District Office**

**OPINION AND ORDER
DENYING PETITION
FOR RECONSIDERATION**

We have considered the allegations of the Petition for Reconsideration and the contents of the report of the workers' compensation administrative law judge (WCJ) with respect thereto. Based on our review of the record, and based upon the WCJ's analysis of the merits of the petitioner's arguments in the WCJ's report, we will deny the Petition as one seeking reconsideration.

If a decision includes resolution of a "threshold" issue, then it is a "final" decision, whether or not all issues are resolved or there is an ultimate decision on the right to benefits. (*Aldi v. Carr, McClellan, Ingersoll, Thompson & Horn* (2006) 71 Cal.Comp.Cases 783, 784, fn. 2 (Appeals Board en banc).) Threshold issues include, but are not limited to, the following: injury arising out of and in the course of employment, jurisdiction, the existence of an employment relationship and statute of limitations issues. (See *Capital Builders Hardware, Inc. v. Workers' Comp. Appeals Bd. (Gaona)* (2016) 5 Cal.App.5th 658, 662 [81 Cal.Comp.Cases 1122].) Failure to timely petition for reconsideration of a final decision bars later challenge to the propriety of the decision before the WCAB or court of appeal. (See Lab. Code, § 5904.) Alternatively, non-final decisions may later be challenged by a petition for reconsideration once a final decision issues.

A decision issued by the Appeals Board may address a hybrid of both threshold and interlocutory issues. If a party challenges a hybrid decision, the petition seeking relief is treated as a petition for reconsideration because the decision resolves a threshold issue. However, if the petitioner challenging a hybrid decision only disputes the WCJ's determination regarding interlocutory issues, then the Appeals Board will evaluate the issues raised by the petition under the removal standard applicable to non-final decisions.

Here, the WCJ's decision incorporates the parties' stipulations from the February 9, 2022 Minutes of Hearing and Summary of Evidence (MOH/SOE) which include stipulations as to employment and injury arising out of and occurring in the course of employment (AOE/COE). Accordingly, the WCJ's decision is a final order subject to reconsideration rather than removal.

Although the decision contains a findings that are final, the petitioner is only challenging an interlocutory finding/order in the decision. Therefore, we will apply the removal standard to our review. (See *Gaona, supra.*)

Removal is an extraordinary remedy rarely exercised by the Appeals Board. (*Cortez v. Workers' Comp. Appeals Bd.* (2006) 136 Cal.App.4th 596, 599, fn. 5 [71 Cal.Comp.Cases 155]; *Kleemann v. Workers' Comp. Appeals Bd.* (2005) 127 Cal.App.4th 274, 280, fn. 2 [70 Cal.Comp.Cases 133].) The Appeals Board will grant removal only if the petitioner shows that significant prejudice or irreparable harm will result if removal is not granted. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 8, § 10955(a); see also *Cortez, supra*; *Kleemann, supra.*) Also, the petitioner must demonstrate that reconsideration will not be an adequate remedy if a final decision adverse to the petitioner ultimately issues. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 8, § 10955(a).) Here, based upon the WCJ's analysis of the merits of the petitioner's arguments, we are not persuaded that significant prejudice or irreparable harm will result if removal is denied and/or that reconsideration will not be an adequate remedy. Therefore, we will deny the Petition as one seeking reconsideration.

While we are denying the petition, we offer the following guidance. We acknowledge that defendant's November 5, 2020 objection to the November 20, 2017 report was not timely pursuant to Labor Code section 4062. (Applicant's Exhibit 3.) However, applicant did not raise this objection until she filed a Declaration of Readiness to Proceed (DOR) on May 4, 2021 after the March 3, 2021 report of Robert Kolesnik, M.D., was received. Therefore, that objection was waived. We further note that whether or not a medical report is substantial evidence is a

determination regarding the weight of the evidence, not its admissibility. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 8, § 10682(c).)

For the foregoing reasons,

IT IS ORDERED that the Petition for Reconsideration/Removal is **DENIED**.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEALS BOARD

/s/ MARGUERITE SWEENEY, COMMISSIONER

I CONCUR,

/s/ PATRICIA A. GARCIA, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

/s/ KATHERINE WILLIAMS DODD, COMMISSIONER



DATED AND FILED AT SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

October 17, 2022

SERVICE MADE ON THE ABOVE DATE ON THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW AT THEIR ADDRESSES SHOWN ON THE CURRENT OFFICIAL ADDRESS RECORD.

**MARIA HERNANDEZ
MOORE & ASSOCIATES
DJG LAW GROUP, INC.**

PAG/abs

I certify that I affixed the official seal of the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board to this original decision on this date. *abs*