

AOE/COE Investigation Report

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Case Overview

Claim Number	25004567
Employee	Nicole Moore
Employer	Evergreen Wellness Center
Date of Injury	09/12/2024
Examiner	Jordan Peters
Investigation Vendor	Field Investigation Services (Case FIS-24-0912-RC)
Report Date	12/01/2024

Assignment

The claims administrator requested an AOE/COE investigation related to a reported specific injury involving the lumbar spine, left hip, and left knee on 09/12/2024, with later allegations of right shoulder and psychological injury. The objective was to document the accident, verify work-relatedness, and identify any alternative or contributing causes.

Sources of Information

- Recorded claimant statement obtained by examiner on 10/07/2024.
- Supervisor statement (Daniel Ruiz) dated 09/25/2024.
- Coworker statement (Alicia Gomez) dated 09/26/2024.
- Incident report and internal safety/housekeeping logs.
- Stairwell inspection conducted 09/27/2024 by facility safety officer and field investigator.
- Security video for stairwell area on 09/12/2024 around time of incident.
- ISO/EAMS search results dated 09/24/2024 and updated 11/12/2024.
- Medical reports from PrimeCare Occupational Health and Riverside Orthopedic Medical Group.

Summary of Witness Statements

Claimant – Nicole Moore (10/07/2024)

- Describes escorting a resident down the main stairwell at approximately 7:15 p.m. on 09/12/2024.
- Resident abruptly stopped and pulled backward on her left arm, causing her to miss a step and twist her left foot and knee.
- Reports lurching forward, striking or jamming the left knee, and feeling immediate low back pain.
- States she grabbed the handrail with her right arm and did not fall fully to the landing.
- Reported the incident before end of shift and presented to PrimeCare the next morning.
- Denies prior left knee or hip injuries; acknowledges 2018 industrial lumbar claim and long-standing anxiety.

Supervisor – Daniel Ruiz (09/25/2024)

- Confirms an incident occurred in the main stairwell at around 7:15 p.m. involving Ms. Moore and a resident.
- Did not see the near-fall itself but arrived shortly after; Moore reported twisting her knee and low back.
- Observed a mild limp; instructed completion of incident report.
- Notes the resident was generally steady and usually used stairs without incident.

Coworker – Alicia Gomez (09/26/2024)

- Was a few steps behind Moore and the resident.
- Observed the resident pause and pull slightly backward on Moore's arm.
- Saw Moore lurch forward and grab the handrail; does not recall a full fall to the ground.
- Noted no visible liquid or debris on the stairs.

Stairwell Inspection / Safety Review

- Housekeeping log shows the stairwell was mopped at approximately 2:00 p.m. on 09/12/2024 with a 30-minute dry time and "dry/no issues" notation.
- Inspection on 09/27/2024 found no loose treads, uneven steps, or structural defects; handrails secure; lighting adequate.
- No documented spills, leaks, or maintenance work at the time of the incident.

Video Review

Security footage (view partially obstructed) shows the employee and resident descending the stairs. The resident appears to hesitate and move backward, and the employee can be seen lurching forward and toward the handrail. No complete fall to the landing is visible. No obvious foreign substance is visible on the stairs.

Prior Claim / Medical History

- 2018 industrial lumbar claim with a prior employer (Sunrise House), settled with a stipulated award later closed by compromise and release.
- Prior medical-only left ankle strain with current employer in 2021, fully resolved.
- One non-industrial auto claim in 2020 with neck/back complaints, resolved with a third-party carrier.
- No prior industrial left knee or hip injuries found.

Right Shoulder and Psychological Allegations

- Witnesses did not recall immediate right shoulder complaints on date of injury.
- Initial urgent care and early progress reports refer only to low back, left hip, and left knee.
- Right shoulder soreness first noted in a 10/21/2024 visit as mild, with no detailed traumatic description.
- Psych QME later attributes less than 10% of current psychiatric condition to the work event, citing significant pre-existing factors.

Conclusions

- The described mechanism is consistent with an acute lumbar strain and left knee injury, with associated left hip strain.
- The injury occurred in the course of employment while the employee was performing assigned duties.
- Evidence supports acceptance of the lumbar, left hip, and left knee injuries as industrial.
- Evidence does not support a separate, ongoing industrial right shoulder injury or a compensable psychiatric injury under applicable standards.