

| GENERAL INFORMATION | |
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| KEYWORDS | Marine medical certificate, back pain, medication, narcotics |
| FILE NO. | MH-0404-28 |
| SECTOR (Marine or Aviation) | Marine |
| SPECIFIC JOB | Chief engineer on a ferry |
| DIAGNOSIS (Primary, Secondary, etc.) | History of chronic back pain |
| REVIEW | |
| DATE OF DETERMINATION | June 29, 2017 |
| MEMBER | Dr. Robert Perlman |
| DETERMINATION | The matter is referred back to the Minister for reconsideration. |
| REASONS FOR THE DETERMINATION | <p>Refusal to issue a marine medical certificate – It was established that the applicant is on long-acting opiates due to his history of chronic back pain. In January 2015, the applicant's back seized up and he could not work at all. When it was medically confirmed that he was able to return to work, a refusal to issue a marine medical certificate was issued to the applicant. The gradual use of narcotics over a long period, as demonstrated in the applicant's file, is described as a build-up of tolerance that is a common feature of long-term narcotic use. There is a distinction to be made between short-term use of narcotics for acute phase illness and long-term use to control chronic back pain. Under careful medical supervision, with no reported side effects affecting safety, and with a 20-year "track record" of adequate performance, flexibility appears warranted on a case-by-case basis. The limitations imposed by the Minister regarding the applicant's certificate issued on May 27, 2013, including "Coastal Class 2" and "Engine department", would address certain concerns by ensuring the applicant remain in his present occupation, working solely on a ferry ship with a 15-minute crossing, with an assistant engineer working with him at all times. For these reasons, the matter is referred back to the Minister for reconsideration.</p> |
| APPEAL | |
| DATE OF DECISION | |
| MEMBERS | |
| DECISION | |
| REASONS FOR THE DECISION | |
| OTHER/COMMENTS | |
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