

January 10, 2005

Blue Care
Appeals Division
Complaint Coordinator
P.O. Box 419169
Kansas City, MO 64141-6169

Re: Coverage of Mercury Poisoning expenses

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing to request reimbursement of my expenses related to mercury poisoning. I suffered from mercury poisoning after breaking a mercury thermometer in my home in December 2003. It took three months to get a diagnosis of mercury poisoning from my primary care physician. He referred me to Dr. A. (alias) as this was the only doctor he knew that treated mercury poisoning. Dr. A. was outside of my network. After calling all the allergy/immunology doctors in my network and after contacting Blue Cross by phone, it seemed he was the only choice for treatment. Earlier in 2004, my primary care physician had requested coverage for my visits to Dr. A. for treatment. The appeal was refused on the grounds that my primary care doctor's urine testing of my mercury levels were not consistent with this diagnosis. As you will see if you visit Dr. Boyd Haley's web page (on attached References page), urine testing is not valid to ascertain mercury levels. In fact, if you research this issue of mercury testing at any length, you will find that mercury, after the initial exposure, quickly settles into organs and tissue and leaves the blood stream. Consequently, it is difficult to test. There are several tests – most combined with a chemical provocation to force the body to release some mercury – but all these tests have their proponents and opponents and issues. If you're using a urine level test with provocation by DMSA (Chemet) or DPMS, how can do you time the urine collection when the mercury is being released by the body? Dr. A. had me collect urine on the third day of taking the DMSA and my recent research all states that it should be collected on the first day. Nevertheless, I have attached a copy of the test results from the second round of DMSA (first round was in March 2004; second round was in May 2004) which shows an elevated mercury level.

By the time I reached a doctor with mercury treating experience, I was so sick that the focus was on treatment and symptom reduction so that I could keep my job. Testing would come later, and, as I have found out by reading and my experience, medical providers use different tests to help them with treatment plans, but no mercury level tests are definitive. The patient's symptoms are evaluated, you're treated for mercury poisoning based on your symptoms and if the treatment is effective then that is the definitive proof of the diagnosis.

Mercury poisoning is controversial because there is so much liability and legal exposure at a corporate level. The American Dental Association routinely denies that amalgams and mercury are dangerous as they have an exposure to lawsuits. Prior to the formation of the ADA, there were two dental associations who fell out over the issue of mercury being poisonous and this was in the early 1900's. The ADA sprang out of a group who liked the cheap cost of the amalgam fillings and saw a growth industry with dental work being affordable to more people. The EPA rates mercury as one of the most toxic substances on our planet yet we put it in our mouths. Toys have been recalled due to mercury content, electric utility plants have been sued over mercury pollution and dentists have to treat amalgams as toxic waste when disposing of it, yet the medical community largely ignores

treatment of mercury-poisoned individuals. Most doctors I have discussed this with openly ask me what my symptoms were as they had no training in medical school on this very important issue of mercury poisoning. Many European countries have banned or are in the process of banning mercury amalgams. Connecticut is trying to ban it as are several other states, like California.

I wish that the media would bring more attention to this very real medical issue. I wish that medical schools would train doctors on how to treat mercury poisoning—both from broken thermometers and other sources. I wish that standard tests and treatment protocols would be developed and practiced by doctors that contract with insurance networks. Until such time, patients waste much time and energy trying to find someone knowledgeable to help them get well. These providers typically are not covered by insurance and often recommend treatments (supplements and IVs) that are not a drugstore prescription and so are not covered by insurance. The media discusses mercury poisoning from fish but does not cover other mercury toxic issues such as amalgams, mercury thermometers, light bulbs and other sources. Mercury thermometers are no longer sold but there has been no media attention given to this dangerous household object that should be disposed of as toxic waste and should not be in anyone's home. I am seeing more and more articles related to mercury poisoning from eating fish and environmental pollution yet there is no discussion of symptoms from mercury poisoning or how to get effective treatment. The public badly needs to be educated on this topic.

I have attached a spreadsheet and a copy of all bills for my year-to-date expenses related to the mercury poisoning. I currently spend \$140.00 a week on the vitamin IVs, not to mention all the doctor, dentist, endodontist, oral surgeon and supplement costs. I have attached a spreadsheet that outlines the costs incurred this year. I believe that mercury poisoning is a complicated and expensive medical problem that needs more attention by the medical community and treatment needs to be covered by insurance.

I have attached a summary of my expenses that has broken out the expenses in columns for each treatment type. Under the dental column, I have noted the amount of dental insurance reimbursement to net my true out-of-pocket expenses. I have also attached a copy of each bill listed as well as a list of reference material on mercury poisoning and a history of some of the medical events that occurred during this past year. With out-of-pocket expenses totaling \$13,087.31 for this calendar year for expenses related to mercury poisoning (not including in-network co-pays), I now understand why people have to file bankruptcy for medical bills. Prior to this, I did not think I would ever experience large medical outlays because I have health and dental insurance. I now understand that there are medical issues that the medical community has not deemed legitimate that are very expensive to treat. I cannot imagine what happens to someone living at poverty level that has mercury poisoning. I have seen on the mercury chat rooms, on the Internet, where someone has posted "I have spent \$50,000 on out-of-pocket costs to get well" from mercury exposure. These are people, like me, with good jobs that have good benefits including health insurance. We should not have to risk personal bankruptcy due to mercury poisoning.

Class action lawsuits have been brought in Canada and there has been a conference in the U.S. by the class action legal community regarding such action in the U.S. court system. It is sad to me that the only way mercury poisoning issues will become mainstream is if a large class action lawsuit is successful.

The EPA and CDC have held conferences regarding mercury poisoning and the environment and related issues. Many people have mercury poisoning and don't know it

because doctors so rarely recognize and diagnose it. Mercury is the most non-radioactive toxic substance and yet the medical community does not teach its doctors how to recognize or treat mercury toxicity. The alternative medicine community, along with some allergy/immunology doctors, have learned how to treat this effectively and I believe it is one of many reasons why people are increasingly visiting alternative medicine doctors outside of their insurance network.

Since the mercury poisoning was caused by the thermometer and it is a legitimate medical issue, I am requesting reimbursement of my treatment costs. I would appreciate your research and consideration of reimbursement for these expenses.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

D. R. (my initials)

cc: Kansas Insurance Department
420 SW 9th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1678

History:

In December 2003 I broke a mercury thermometer in my home. I did not know how toxic mercury vapor can be. I had never heard of mercury poisoning. In December I had swollen lymph glands and pain near my elbows, knees and ankles and in my neck. In addition, I had “brain fog”—a condition where I felt like I had lost a significant amount of my cognitive ability and worried about losing my job. I had icy feelings in my neck and extremities. I was extremely fatigued and did not feel well. I could not think well and my judgment was extremely impaired. I had a rapid heartbeat, feelings of breathlessness and started taking Xanax for those symptoms. In addition, I could not sleep without Ambien. Without it, I would just lie awake no matter how fatigued I was.

The first problem with mercury poisoning is getting it diagnosed. Unfortunately, few, if any primary care physicians are trained to recognize the symptoms. I spent three months being extremely ill, before getting a diagnosis and that’s generally considered a short time and I am considered lucky. Also, my primary care physician is the one who suggested this might be the problem after he and several specialists had been stumped by my symptoms. It was on about the tenth visit I made to him, repeating my symptoms once again, that he suddenly said “You may have mercury poisoning! It is one of the most undiagnosed illnesses in the country.” I had never heard of it. The only reason he thought of it was because a symptom I mentioned (an icy sensation in my neck and extremities) triggered a memory of a conversation he overheard by a co-worker who had been mercury poisoned. I was extremely lucky—many people go for years without a diagnosis of this problem and lose their jobs and family (due to the huge personality changes after being mercury poisoned and the cognitive impairment).

After seeing my primary care doctor many times and being evaluated by various specialists, my primary care doctor suggested looking into mercury poisoning as he’d had a co-worker that exhibited symptoms similar to mine that had been successfully treated and cured. The only doctor he knew to refer me to was Dr. A.. In my case, Dr. A., the first doctor I was referred to for mercury treatment, did not test correctly or administer DMSA correctly, in my opinion. He prescribed Chemet and had me do urine collection on the third day. I have subsequently read, in many resources, that you should collect it on the first day. So we’ll never know what my initial mercury levels were.

After feeling that my case was not being handled well and that the Chemet was being overdosed, I began to look for another doctor. It took several months of research for me to find Dr. D. who has had to not only treat the mercury poisoning but also repair the damage done to my immune system by the overdoses of Chemet I experienced under the direction of Dr. A..

It was only after doing research about mercury poisoning and its causes that I remembered breaking a mercury thermometer shortly after Thanksgiving, 2003. My symptoms were consistent with that diagnosis. In between the time of my initial diagnosis and the later referral to Dr. A. (it took a couple of weeks to get his name), it was suggested that I have amalgam dental fillings removed. Until this time, I had no plans for dental work this year beyond my annual cleaning. I thought my mouth was the least of my problems. However, I soon found out by medical opinion and research that you need to remove mercury from your mouth for several reasons. For one thing, those amalgam fillings are leaking mercury into your system at all times. Furthermore, the mercury they are leaking can be moved into your brain and organs even further by chelation treatments.

Anyone who treats you for mercury poisoning will rightly insist on removing this toxic

element from your mouth. However, I had dental work done prior to seeing anyone experienced in mercury poisoning treatment and the dental work was not done in a safe manner. So I was exposed to yet more mercury poisoning and grew more ill. I feared losing my job because I was so sick and so mentally confused. I used up all my sick pay and accrued vacation by February, 2004. By the time I saw Dr. A., I was severely mercury poisoned and he immediately prescribed a round of Chemet. Based on his experience, he made the diagnosis by symptom evaluation and prescribed this drug to get me some relief quickly. I was told that I would have many rounds of Chemet and that it would take two years to get well.

After two rounds of Chemet I had some reduction of symptoms but felt that the Chemet had been over-prescribed - dangerously so – and that my case was not being handled well. I had been prescribed 4500 mgs of Chemet over a period of three days, once in March 2004 and the other time in May 2004, which I now believe is a huge overdose. After some research, I found a doctor at the University of Kansas School of Medicine. She is an M.D. that has additional certification in alternative medicine. She referred me to a dentist who could more safely remove the amalgam fillings. Also, she has been treating me for all the associated biochemistry disruption that occurs with mercury poisoning. It disrupts your neurotransmitter and hormone functioning among other problems. I have to take Ambien to sleep (otherwise I lie awake all night) and Xanax to reduce the rapid heart beat and breathless feelings. In addition, she's suggested supplements to support amino acids and neurotransmitters to correct the damage done by the mercury poisoning landing on cells and interrupting normal functioning and to enhance my body's natural (but slower) chelation processes.

I took a reduced amount of Chemet a third time in June, 2004, around the time of some additional dental work. I now believe the first two rounds – dangerously high levels of Chemet – combined with this third round and all the exposure from the various dental procedures had severely damaged my immune system. My energy level, which had been low, was so compromised that I did not have enough stamina to work 8 hours a day. Between June and September, 2004, I had five rounds of antibiotics and much dental work in an attempt to overcome infection. I contacted Dr. D., who said to stop the amalgam removal, for now, as my immune system was too compromised. She prescribed vitamin infusions twice weekly (vitamin C, magnesium and B complex) in an effort to restore my immune system. As I write this, I have one crown and a bridge yet to be installed. The bridge is to replace a tooth that was a recurring site of infection. This tooth that was removed had a gold crown on top of an amalgam filling—a combination that research has shown to be very dangerous. The two in combination disperse the mercury throughout your tissues even more so than an amalgam filling alone.

I had my last amalgams removed the first part of December 2004. My immune system is so compromised that I can no longer use DMSA or one of the aggressive chelators. At this point I am taking supplements to support my body's chelation processes.

In addition, I had my gall bladder removed December 22, 2004. It was fine prior to the mercury poisoning. We believe that due to the extremely high load of mercury toxicity I had and the dangerous levels of Chemet that I was prescribed, that the gall bladder was damaged.

I work in-office two days a week and from home three days a week because I do not have the stamina for a regular week that involves commuting and grooming for work. I frequently lie down for my lunch hour. My mother has moved here temporarily (she lives in Texas) in order to cook, clean and run errands so that I can spend my energy on doing my job and doctor visits. I consider myself fortunate that I program software for a

living and can work from home—at least part time. Obviously it would be advantageous to work in-office as I miss out on much communication and on-the-job training that I would receive were I working at my place of employment. I consider myself fortunate that I have family to support me during this horrific year.

Mercury poisoning is very difficult to deal with. Mercury has a half life of 25 years and although the human body can excrete it, it does so very slowly. Only with assistance can you speed up the removal of this poison. Meanwhile you have mental confusion and feel extremely antisocial. You have chronic fatigue and have no energy for spending time with friends and family or doing your normal hobbies and activities. I have dedicated all my energy this year to doctor and dental visits and work. I have not seen friends or been able to visit my grandchildren who are out of town. I have not been able to enjoy gardening or other hobbies. This has been a great loss for me. In addition, I have gone without pay for 8 days due to my medical problems that exceeded my vacation and sick days. So in addition to having about 1/3 of my take-home pay spent on out-of-pocket medical costs, I lost salary due to illness.

Dr. D.'s recommendations and treatment have helped immensely. The Chemet reduced the brain fog, so that I could function and work. The other supplements and IV nutrients that she has prescribed have eliminated some of my symptoms and reduced the rest. I hope that with continuing treatment, that in 2005 I will be able to work at my office full time and resume hobbies and my normal life.

References:

http://64.41.99.118/vran/vaccines/mercury/mer_haley.htm

Dr. Boyd Haley-leading researcher in the U.S. on mercury toxicity and is a professor at the University of Kentucky. This article states that urine testing is of no value for mercury levels and explains why.

A Mouth Full of Poison, Dr. Myron Wentz

Amalgam Illness: diagnosis and treatment, Andrew Hall Cutler PhD PE

Beating Alzheimer's, Tom Warren

Dental Mercury Detox, Sam Ziff & Michael F. Ziff, D.D.S., Mats Hanson, Ph.D.

Dentistry Without Mercury, Sam Ziff & Michael F. Ziff, D.D.S.

Detoxify or Die, Sherry A. Rogers, M.D.

Elements of Danger, Morton Walker, D.P.M.

It's All In Your Head, Hal Huggins

Mercury Free, Dr. James E. Hardy

<http://autism.about.com/library/weekly/aa071801a.htm>

class action lawsuit regarding mercury in vaccines

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