

1 **II. Appearances of Counsel**

2 No appearance on behalf of Plaintiff.

3 Kristina Gruenberg appeared on behalf of Defendants.

4 **III. Information Concerning the Court's Schedule**

5 Out of fairness, the Court believes it is necessary to forewarn litigants that the Fresno Division
6 of the Eastern District of California now has the heaviest District Court Judge caseload in the entire
7 nation. While the Court will use its best efforts to resolve this case and all other civil cases in a timely
8 manner, the parties are admonished that not all of the parties' needs and expectations may be met as
9 expeditiously as desired. As multiple trials are now being set to begin upon the same date, parties may
10 find their case trailing with little notice before the trial begins. The law requires that the Court give any
11 criminal trial priority over civil trials or any other matter. The Court must proceed with a criminal trial
12 even if a civil trial was filed earlier and set for trial first. Continuances of any civil trial under these
13 circumstances will no longer be entertained, absent a specific and stated finding of good cause. All
14 parties should be informed that any civil trial set to begin during the time a criminal trial is proceeding
15 will trail the completion of the criminal trial.

16 The parties are reminded of the availability of a United States Magistrate Judge to conduct all
17 proceedings in this action. A United States Magistrate Judge is available to conduct trials, including
18 entry of final judgment, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(c), Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 73, and Local
19 Rule 305. The same jury pool is used by both United States Magistrate Judges and United States
20 District Court Judges. Any appeal from a judgment entered by a United States Magistrate Judge is
21 taken directly to the United States Court of Appeal for the Ninth Circuit. However, the parties are
22 hereby informed that no substantive rulings or decisions will be affected by whether a party chooses to
23 consent.

24 Finally, the Fresno Division of the Eastern District of California, whenever possible, is utilizing
25 United States Article III District Court Judges from throughout the nation as Visiting Judges. Pursuant
26 to the Local Rules, Appendix A, reassignments will be random, and the parties will receive no advance
27 notice before their case is reassigned to an Article III District Court Judge from outside of the Eastern
28 District of California.

1 Therefore, the parties are directed to consider consenting to Magistrate Judge jurisdiction to
2 conduct all further proceedings, including trial. **Within 10 days** of the date of this order, counsel
3 **SHALL** file a consent/decline form (provided by the Court at the inception of this case) indicating
4 whether they will consent to the jurisdiction of the Magistrate Judge.

5 **IV. Pleading Amendment Deadline**

6 Any requested pleading amendments are ordered to be filed, either through a stipulation or
7 motion to amend, no later than **August 31, 2015**.

8 **V. Discovery Plan and Cut-Off Date**

9 The parties are ordered to exchange the initial disclosures required by Fed. R. Civ. P. 26(a)(1)
10 on or before **June 15, 2015**.

11 **Counsel SHALL meet and confer to come to an agreement as to the extent to which**
12 **discovery propounded and responded to in the related matters will be used in this litigation. The**
13 **agreement SHALL be formalized in writing and no discovery may be propounded before this**
14 **occurs.**

15 The parties are ordered to complete all discovery pertaining to non-experts on or before
16 **January 19, 2016**, and all discovery pertaining to experts on or before **April 1, 2016**.

17 The parties are directed to disclose all expert witnesses¹, in writing, on or before **February 5,**
18 **2016**, and to disclose all rebuttal experts on or before **March 4, 2016**. The written designation of
19 retained and non-retained experts shall **be made pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. Rule 26(a)(2), (A), (B),**
20 **and (C) and shall include all information required thereunder**. Failure to designate experts in
21 compliance with this order may result in the Court excluding the testimony or other evidence offered
22 through such experts that are not disclosed pursuant to this order.

23 The provisions of Fed. R. Civ. P. 26(b)(4) and (5) shall apply to all discovery relating to experts
24 and their opinions. Experts must be fully prepared to be examined on all subjects and opinions
25 included in the designation. Failure to comply will result in the imposition of sanctions, which may
26 include striking the expert designation and preclusion of expert testimony.

27 _____
28 ¹ In the event an expert will offer opinions related to an independent medical or mental health evaluation, the
examination SHALL occur sufficiently in advance of the disclosure deadline so the expert's report fully details the
expert's opinions in this regard.

1 The provisions of Fed. R. Civ. P. 26(e) regarding a party's duty to timely supplement
2 disclosures and responses to discovery requests will be strictly enforced.

3 A mid-discovery status conference is scheduled for **October 5, 2015** at 9:00 a.m. before the
4 Honorable Jennifer L. Thurston, U.S. Magistrate Judge, located at 510 19th Street, Bakersfield,
5 California. A Joint Mid-Discovery Status Conference Report, carefully prepared and executed by all
6 counsel, shall be electronically filed in CM/ECF, one full week prior to the Conference, and shall be e-
7 mailed, in Word format, to JLTorders@caed.uscourts.gov. The joint statement SHALL outline the
8 discovery that has been completed and that which needs to be completed as well as any impediments to
9 completing the discovery within the deadlines set forth in this order. Counsel may appear via
10 CourtCall, providing a written request to so appear is made to the Magistrate Judge's Courtroom Clerk
11 no later than five court days before the noticed hearing date.

12 **VI. Pre-Trial Motion Schedule**

13 All non-dispositive pre-trial motions, including any discovery motions, shall be filed no later
14 than **April 8, 2016**, and heard on or before **May 6, 2016**. Non-dispositive motions are heard at 9:00
15 a.m., before the Honorable Jennifer L. Thurston, United States Magistrate Judge, at the United States
16 District Courthouse located at 510 19th Street, Bakersfield, California.

17 No written discovery motions shall be filed without the prior approval of the assigned
18 Magistrate Judge. A party with a discovery dispute must first confer with the opposing party in a good
19 faith effort to resolve by agreement the issues in dispute. If that good faith effort is unsuccessful, the
20 moving party promptly shall seek a telephonic hearing with all involved parties and the Magistrate
21 Judge. It shall be the obligation of the moving party to arrange and originate the conference call to the
22 court. To schedule this telephonic hearing, the parties are ordered to contact Courtroom Deputy Clerk,
23 Susan Hall at (661) 326-6620 or via email at SHall@caed.uscourts.gov. **Counsel must comply with**
24 **Local Rule 251 with respect to discovery disputes or the motion will be denied without prejudice**
25 **and dropped from calendar.**

26 In scheduling such motions, the Magistrate Judge may grant applications for an order shortening
27 time pursuant to Local Rule 144(e). However, if counsel does not obtain an order shortening time, the
28 notice of motion *must* comply with Local Rule 251.

1 Counsel may appear and argue non-dispositive motions via CourtCall, providing a written
2 request to so appear is made to the Magistrate Judge's Courtroom Clerk no later than five court days
3 before the noticed hearing date.

4 All dispositive pre-trial motions shall be filed no later than **May 30, 2016**, and heard no later
5 than **July 18, 2016**, in Courtroom 2 at 8:30 a.m. before the Honorable Anthony W. Ishii, United States
6 District Court Judge. In scheduling such motions, **counsel shall comply with Fed. R. Civ. P. 56 and**
7 **Local Rules 230 and 260.**

8 **VII. Motions for Summary Judgment or Summary Adjudication**

9 **At least 21 days before** filing a motion for summary judgment/adjudication or a cross motion,
10 the parties are **ORDERED** to meet, in person or by telephone, to confer about the issues to be raised in
11 the motion.

12 The purpose of the meeting shall be to: 1) avoid filing motions for summary judgment where a
13 question of fact exists; 2) determine whether the respondent agrees that the motion has merit in whole
14 or in part; 3) discuss whether issues can be resolved without the necessity of briefing; 4) narrow the
15 issues for review by the court; 5) explore the possibility of settlement before the parties incur the
16 expense of briefing a summary judgment motion; 6) to arrive at a joint statement of undisputed facts.

17 The moving party shall initiate the meeting and **SHALL** provide a complete, proposed
18 statement of undisputed facts **at least five days before** the conference. The finalized joint statement of
19 undisputed facts **SHALL** include all facts that the parties agree, for purposes of the motion, may be
20 deemed true. **In addition to the requirements of Local Rule 260, the moving party shall file the**
21 **joint statement of undisputed facts.**

22 In the notice of motion the moving party shall certify that the parties have met and conferred as
23 ordered above, or set forth a statement of good cause for the failure to meet and confer.

24 **VIII. Pre-Trial Conference Date**

25 **September 7, 2016**, at 10:00 a.m. in Courtroom 2 before Judge Ishii.

26 The parties are ordered to file a **Joint Pretrial Statement pursuant to Local Rule 281(a)(2).**
27 The parties are further directed to submit a digital copy of their pretrial statement in Word format,
28 directly to Judge Ishii's chambers, by email at AWIOrders@caed.uscourts.gov.

1 Counsels' attention is directed to **Rules 281 and 282 of the Local Rules** of Practice for the
2 Eastern District of California, as to the obligations of counsel in preparing for the pre-trial conference.
3 The Court will insist upon strict compliance with those rules. In addition to the matters set forth in the
4 Local Rules the Joint Pretrial Statement shall include a Joint Statement of the case to be used by the
5 Court to explain the nature of the case to the jury during voir dire.

6 **IX. Trial Date**

7 **November 8, 2016**, at 8:30 a.m. in Courtroom 2 before the Honorable Anthony W. Ishii, United
8 States District Court Judge.

9 A. This is a jury trial.

10 B. Counsels' Estimate of Trial Time: 5-7 days.

11 C. Counsels' attention is directed to Local Rules of Practice for the Eastern District of
12 California, Rule 285.

13 **X. Settlement Conference**

14 The parties may jointly request a settlement conference if they believe the matter is in a posture
15 in which such discussions would likely be fruitful.

16 **XI. Requests for Bifurcation, Appointment of Special Master, or other**
17 **Techniques to Shorten Trial**

18 Not applicable at this time.

19 **XII. Related Matters Pending**

20 There are no pending related matters.

21 **XIII. Compliance with Federal Procedure**

22 All counsel are expected to familiarize themselves with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure
23 and the Local Rules of Practice of the Eastern District of California, and to keep abreast of any
24 amendments thereto. The Court must insist upon compliance with these Rules if it is to efficiently
25 handle its increasing case load, and sanctions will be imposed for failure to follow the Rules as
26 provided in both the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and the Local Rules of Practice for the Eastern
27 District of California.

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1 **XIV. Effect of this Order**

2 The foregoing order represents the best estimate of the court and counsel as to the agenda most
3 suitable to dispose of this case. The trial date reserved is specifically reserved for this case. If the
4 parties determine at any time that the schedule outlined in this order cannot be met, counsel are ordered
5 to notify the court immediately of that fact so that adjustments may be made, either by stipulation or by
6 subsequent status conference.

7 **The dates set in this Order are considered to be firm and will not be modified absent a**
8 **showing of good cause even if the request to modify is made by stipulation. Stipulations**
9 **extending the deadlines contained herein will not be considered unless they are accompanied by**
10 **affidavits or declarations, and where appropriate attached exhibits, which establish good cause**
11 **for granting the relief requested.**

12 Failure to comply with this order may result in the imposition of sanctions.

13
14 IT IS SO ORDERED.

15 Dated: June 8, 2015

/s/ Jennifer L. Thurston
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE